

## MAHIRAVANA

When his rakshasa army was destroyed in the battle against Rama, the prince of Ayodhya, Ravana, the Lord of Lanka, called for his son Mahiravana, a powerful magician. Would he succeed in killing the noble Rama and Lakshmana? Not while Hanuman was around, for this faithful friend had a trick or two of his own. The Bengali "Krittivasa Ramayana" written by poet Krittivasa in the 15th century describes how Hanuman manages to get around the wily sorcerer's schemes.

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# MAHIRAVANA

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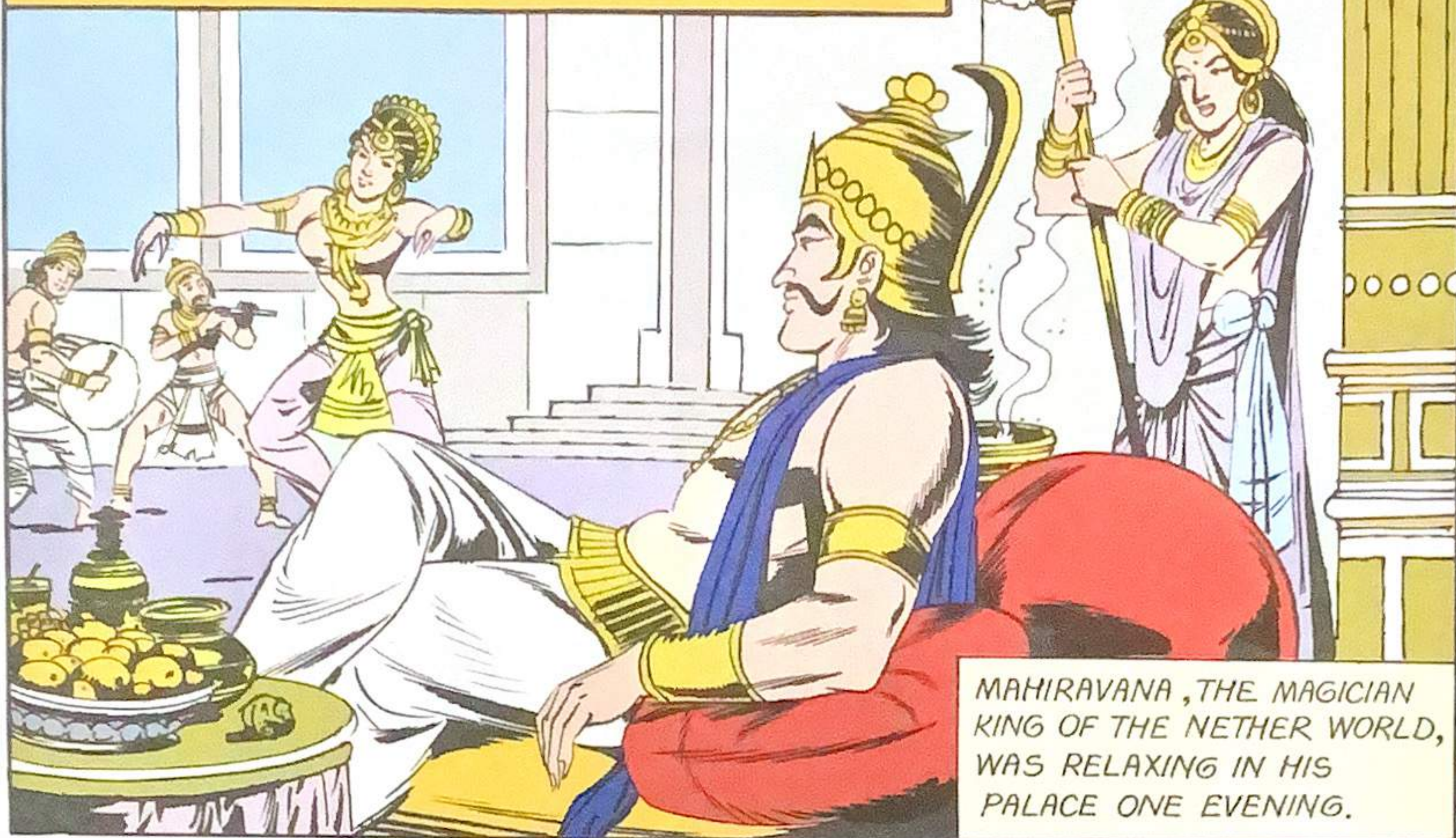


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# MAHIRAVANA



MAHIRAVANA, THE MAGICIAN KING OF THE NETHER WORLD, WAS RELAXING IN HIS PALACE ONE EVENING.

SUDDENLY, THROUGH HIS SUPERNATURAL POWERS, HE PERCEIVED THAT SOMEONE WAS IN DANGER AND NEEDED HIS HELP.

BUT WHO? WHO IS THINKING OF ME? I MUST FIND OUT.

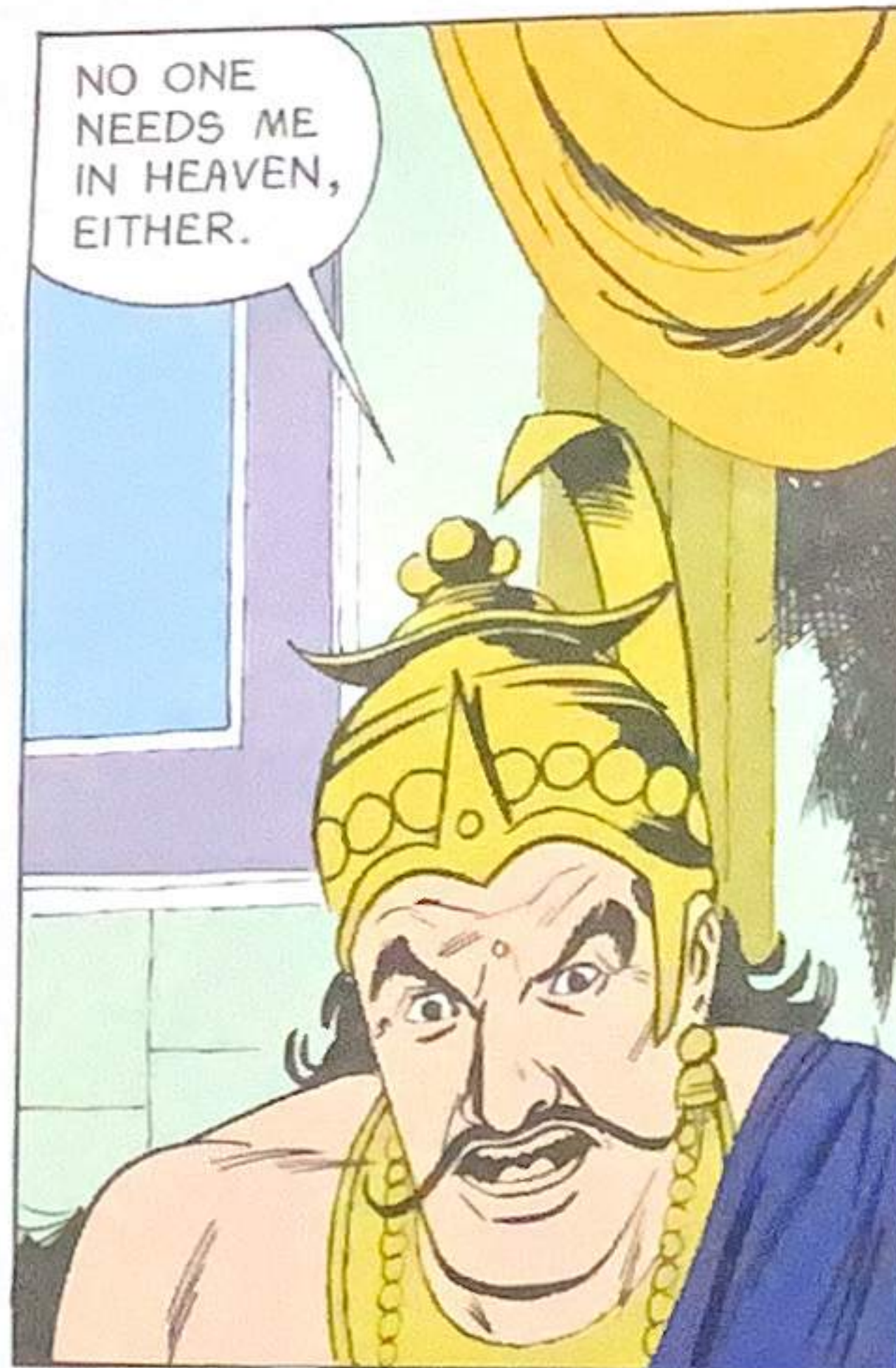


RETIRING TO HIS CHAMBER, HE TRIED TO FIGURE OUT WHO IT WAS.



NO ONE HERE IN THE NETHER WORLD NEEDS MY HELP.



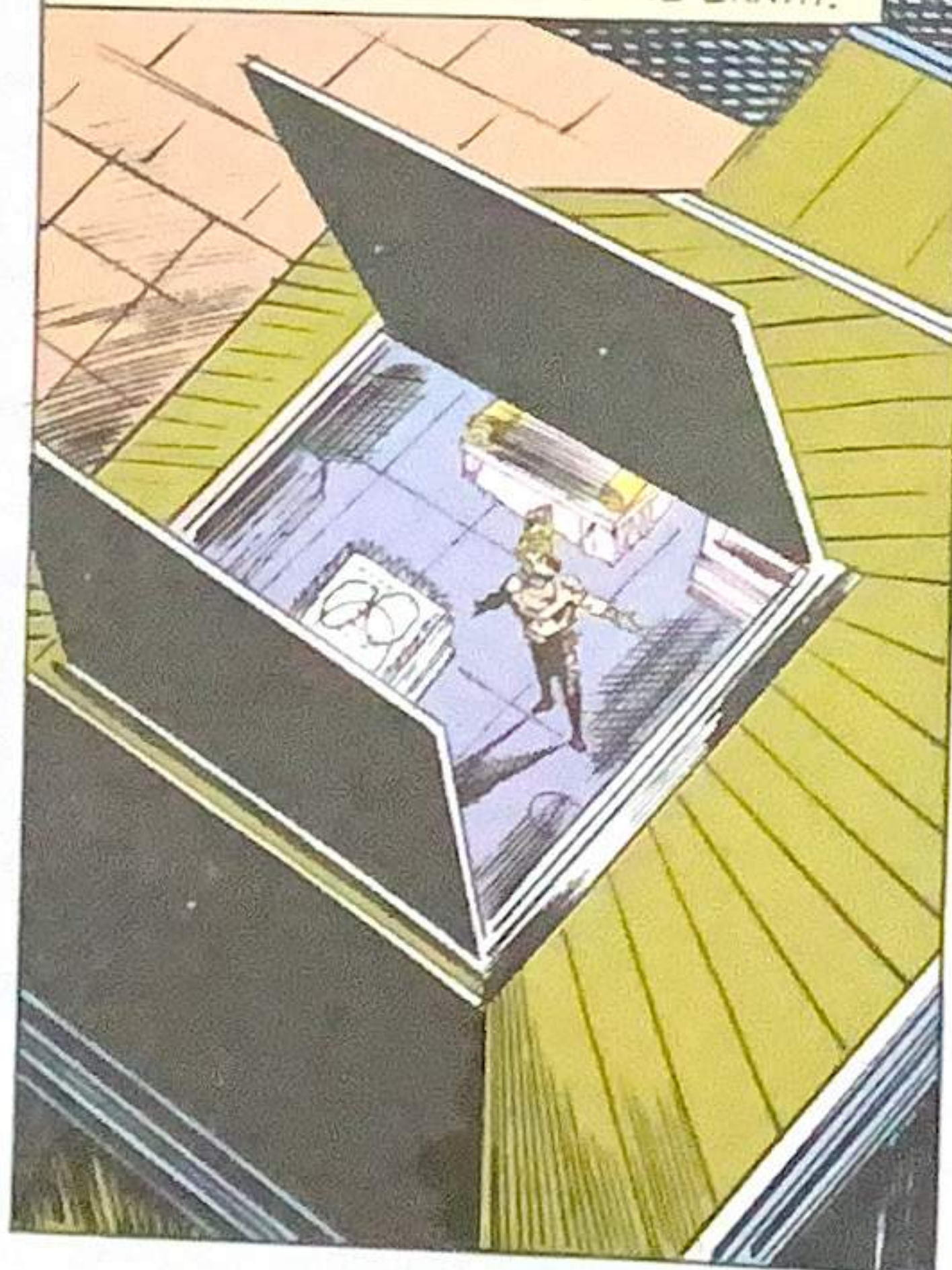


HE THEN THOUGHT OF HIS KITH AND KIN LIVING ON EARTH. THEN—

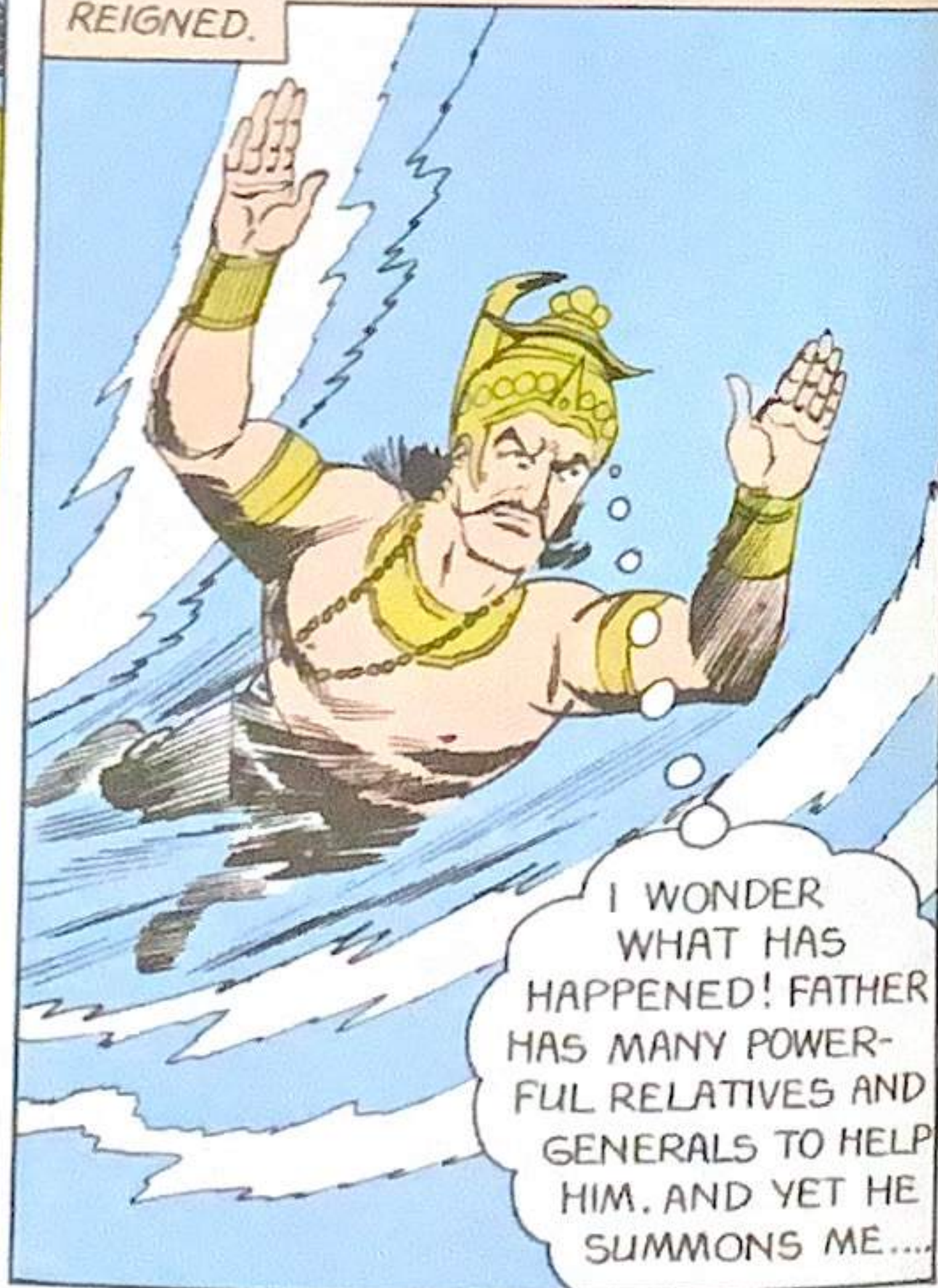
AH! IT'S MY FATHER! HE IS IN DANGER! I MUST GO TO HIM IMMEDIATELY.



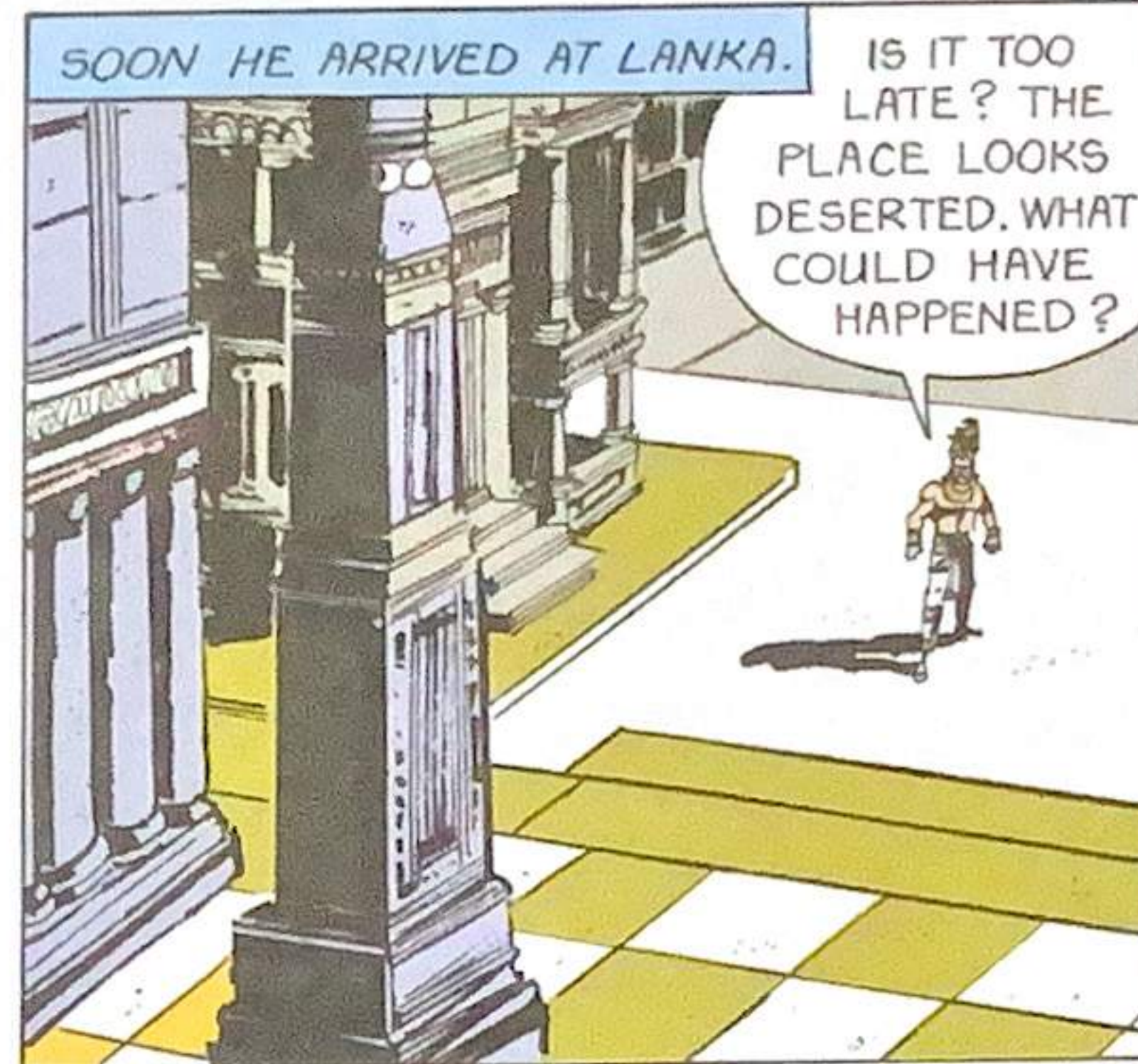
AS HE CHANTED A MAGIC SPELL, THE ROOF OPENED TO GIVE HIM A PATH UPWARDS TOWARDS THE EARTH.



GLIDING OUT, MAHIRAVANA STARTED FOR LANKA, WHERE HIS FATHER, RAVANA, REIGNED.



SOON HE ARRIVED AT LANKA.



MEANWHILE, RAVANA WAITED IMPATIENTLY IN HIS PALACE FOR MAHIRAVANA.

WHY IS HE TAKING SO LONG?



JUST THEN—

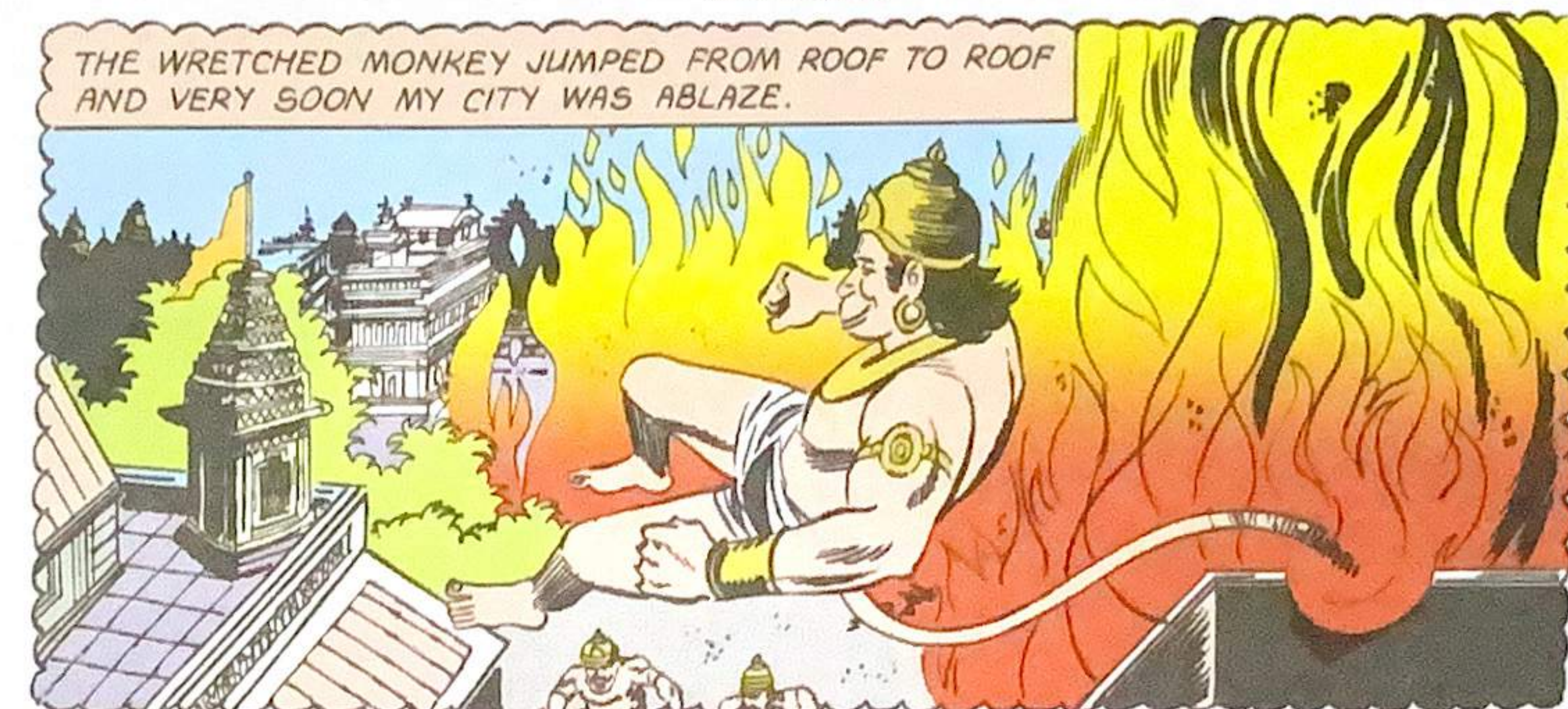
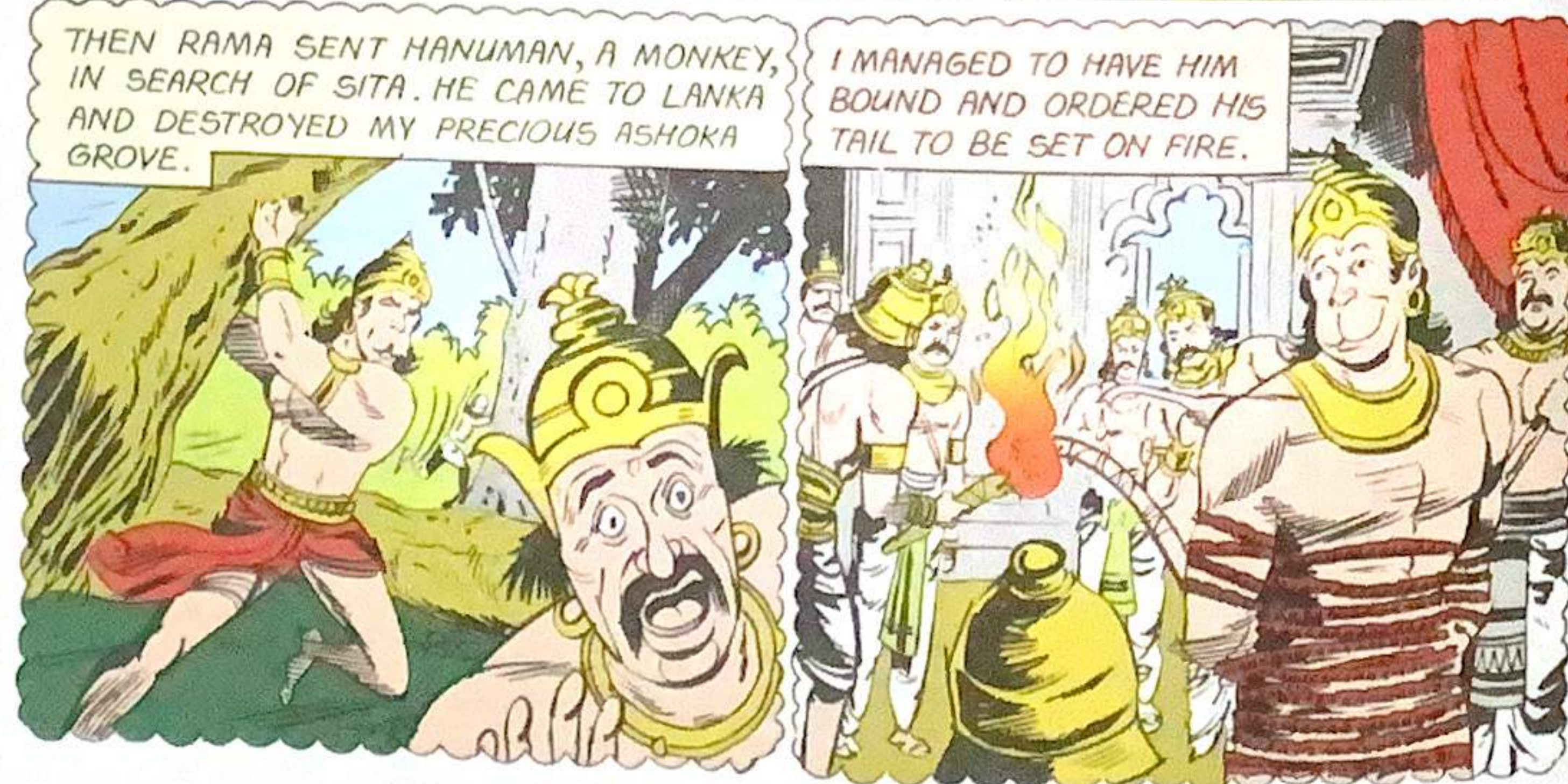
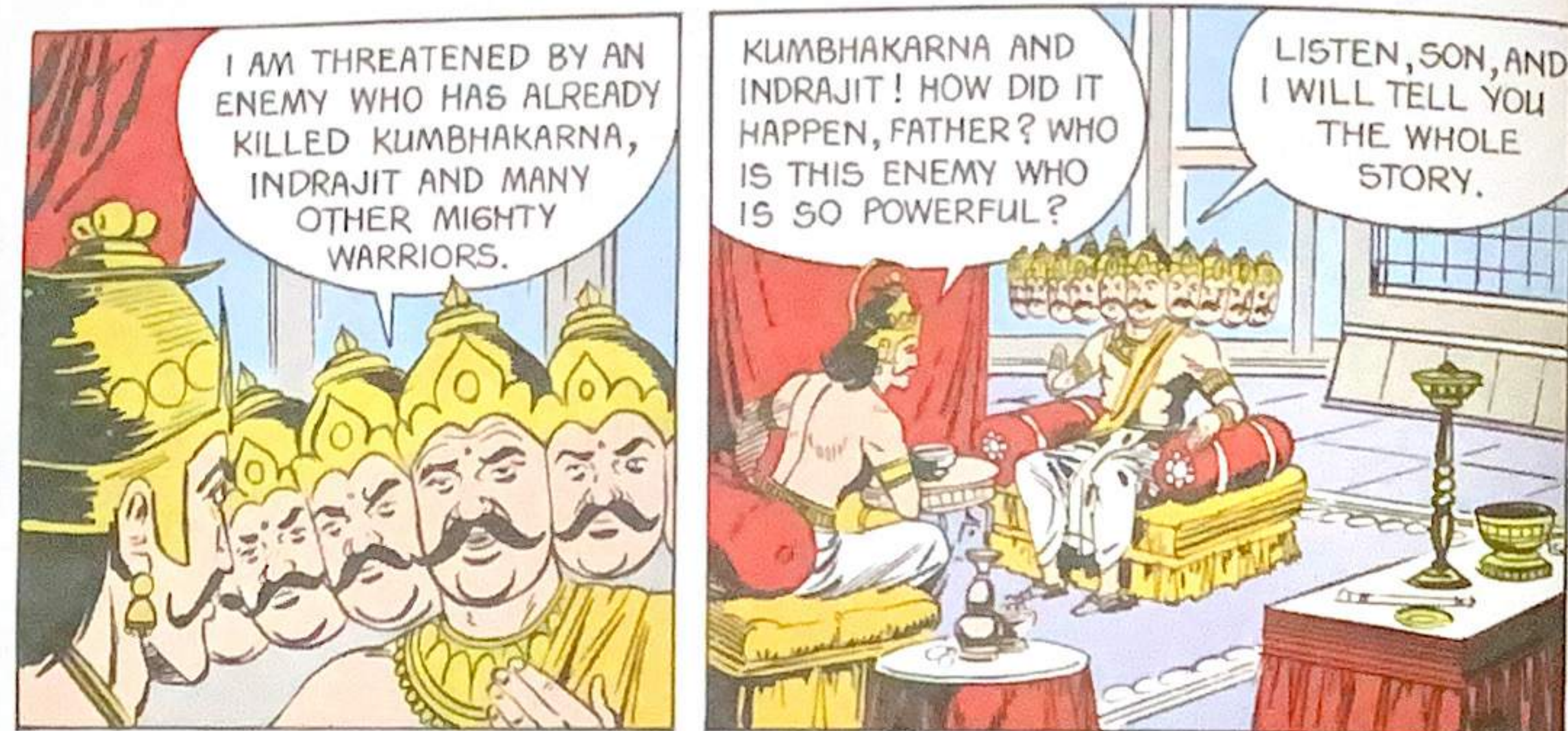
FATHER!



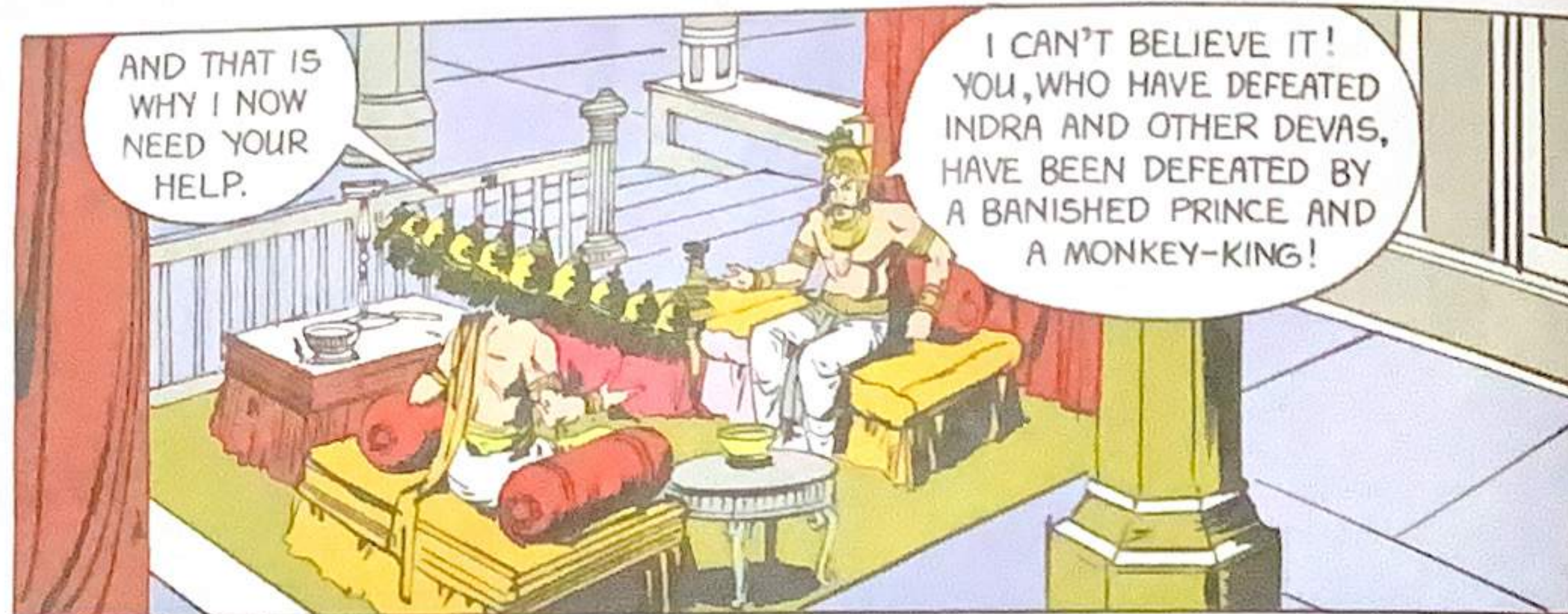
YOU HAVE COME MY SON! I KNEW YOU WOULD NOT FAIL ME.





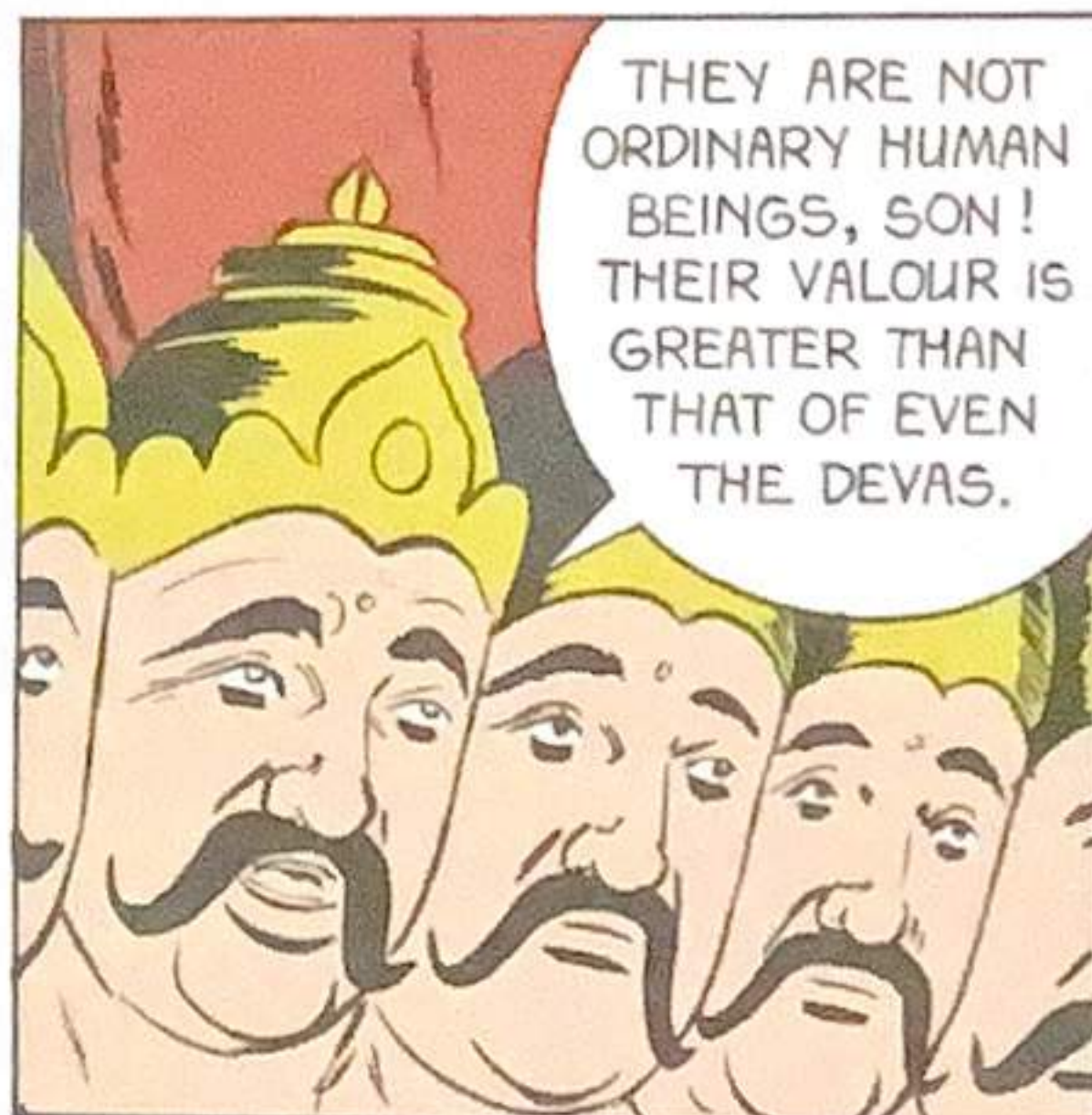




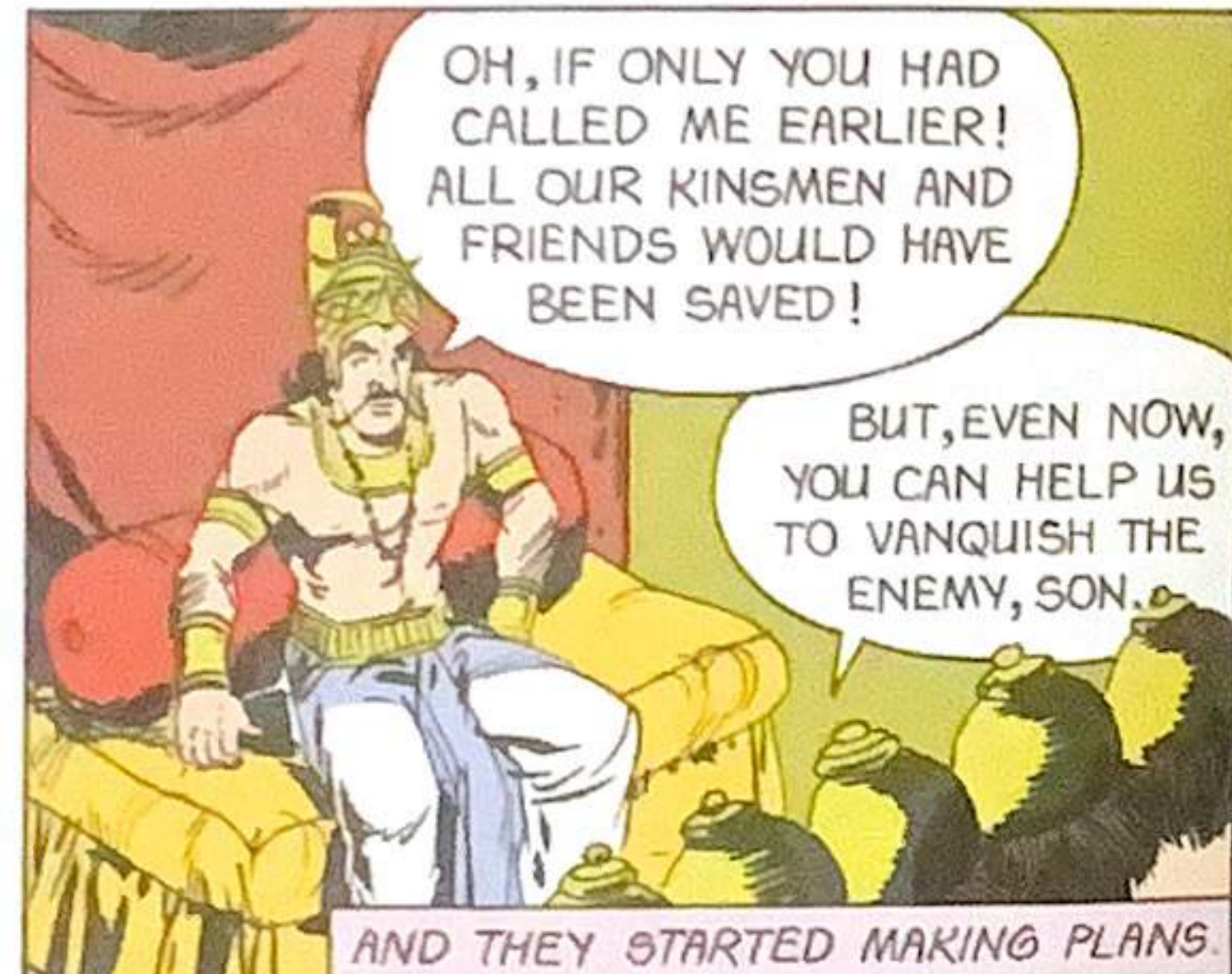


AND THAT IS WHY I NOW NEED YOUR HELP.

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! YOU, WHO HAVE DEFEATED INDRA AND OTHER DEVAS, HAVE BEEN DEFEATED BY A BANISHED PRINCE AND A MONKEY-KING!



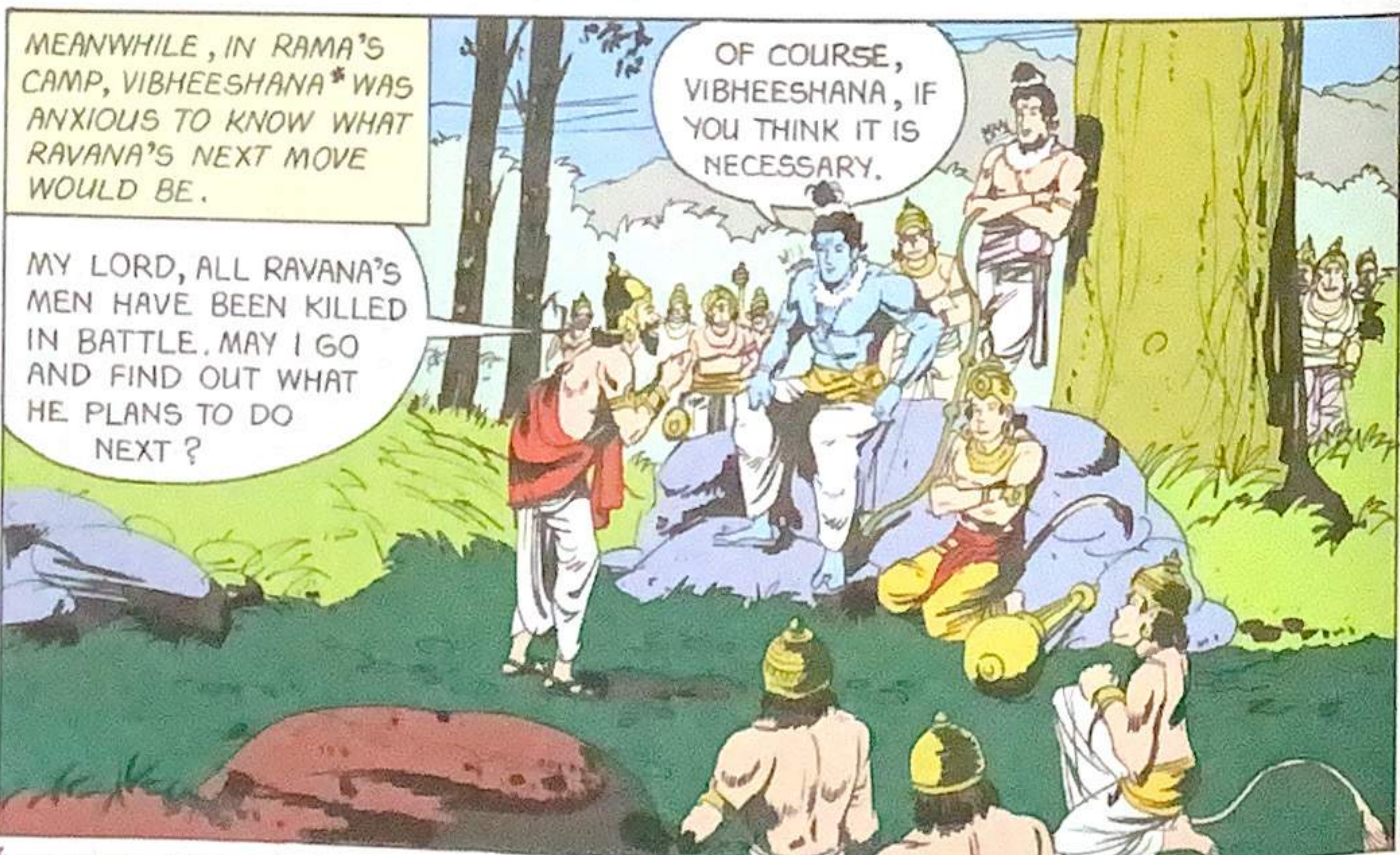
THEY ARE NOT ORDINARY HUMAN BEINGS, SON! THEIR VALOUR IS GREATER THAN THAT OF EVEN THE DEVAS.



OH, IF ONLY YOU HAD CALLED ME EARLIER! ALL OUR KINSMEN AND FRIENDS WOULD HAVE BEEN SAVED!

BUT, EVEN NOW, YOU CAN HELP US TO VANQUISH THE ENEMY, SON.

AND THEY STARTED MAKING PLANS.



OF COURSE, VIBHEESHANA, IF YOU THINK IT IS NECESSARY.

MEANWHILE, IN RAMA'S CAMP, VIBHEESHANA\* WAS ANXIOUS TO KNOW WHAT RAVANA'S NEXT MOVE WOULD BE.

MY LORD, ALL RAVANA'S MEN HAVE BEEN KILLED IN BATTLE. MAY I GO AND FIND OUT WHAT HE PLANS TO DO NEXT?

\*RAVANA'S BROTHER WHO HAD JOINED THE OPPOSITE CAMP



VIBHEESHANA ASSUMED THE FORM OF A BIRD AND FLEW OFF...



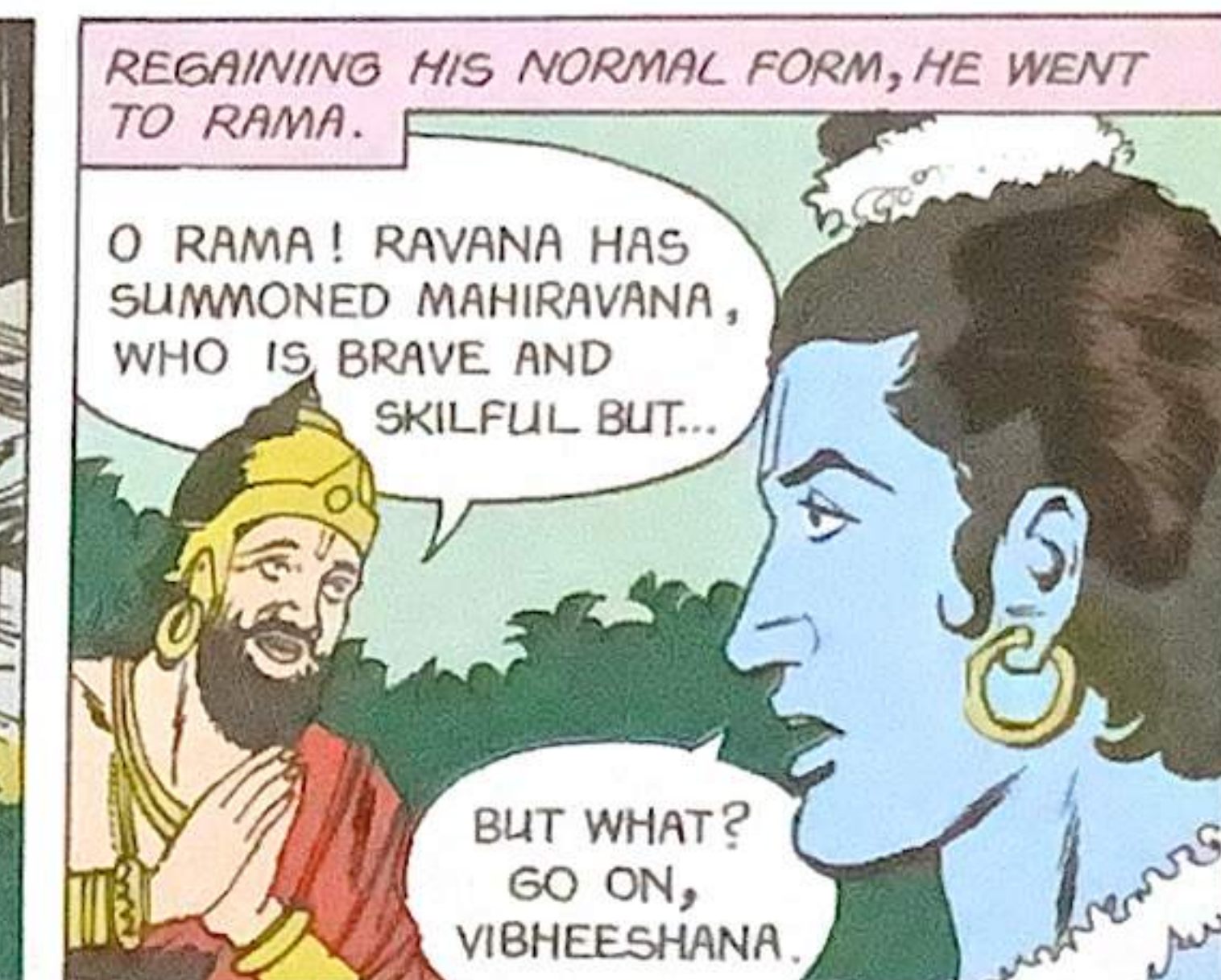
...TILL HE CAME TO RAVANA'S PALACE.

SO, THIS IS IT—RAVANA HAS SUMMONED MAHIRAVANA!



HE HURRIED BACK—

RAMA MUST BE INFORMED OF THIS!



REGAINING HIS NORMAL FORM, HE WENT TO RAMA.

O RAMA! RAVANA HAS SUMMONED MAHIRAVANA, WHO IS BRAVE AND SKILFUL BUT...

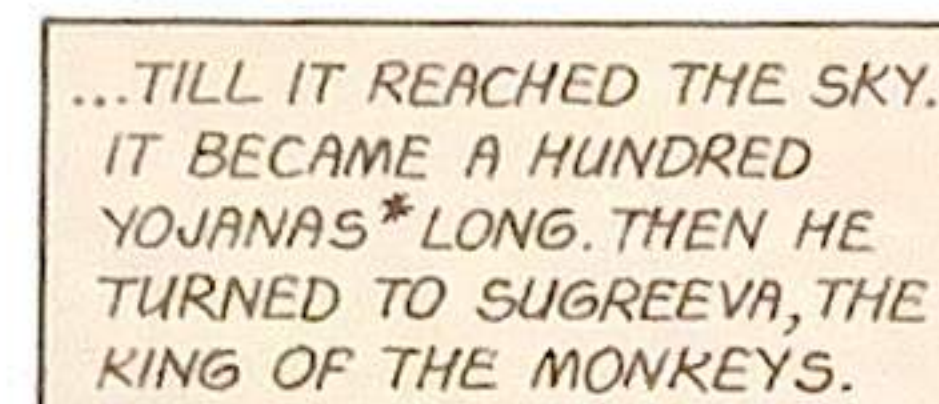
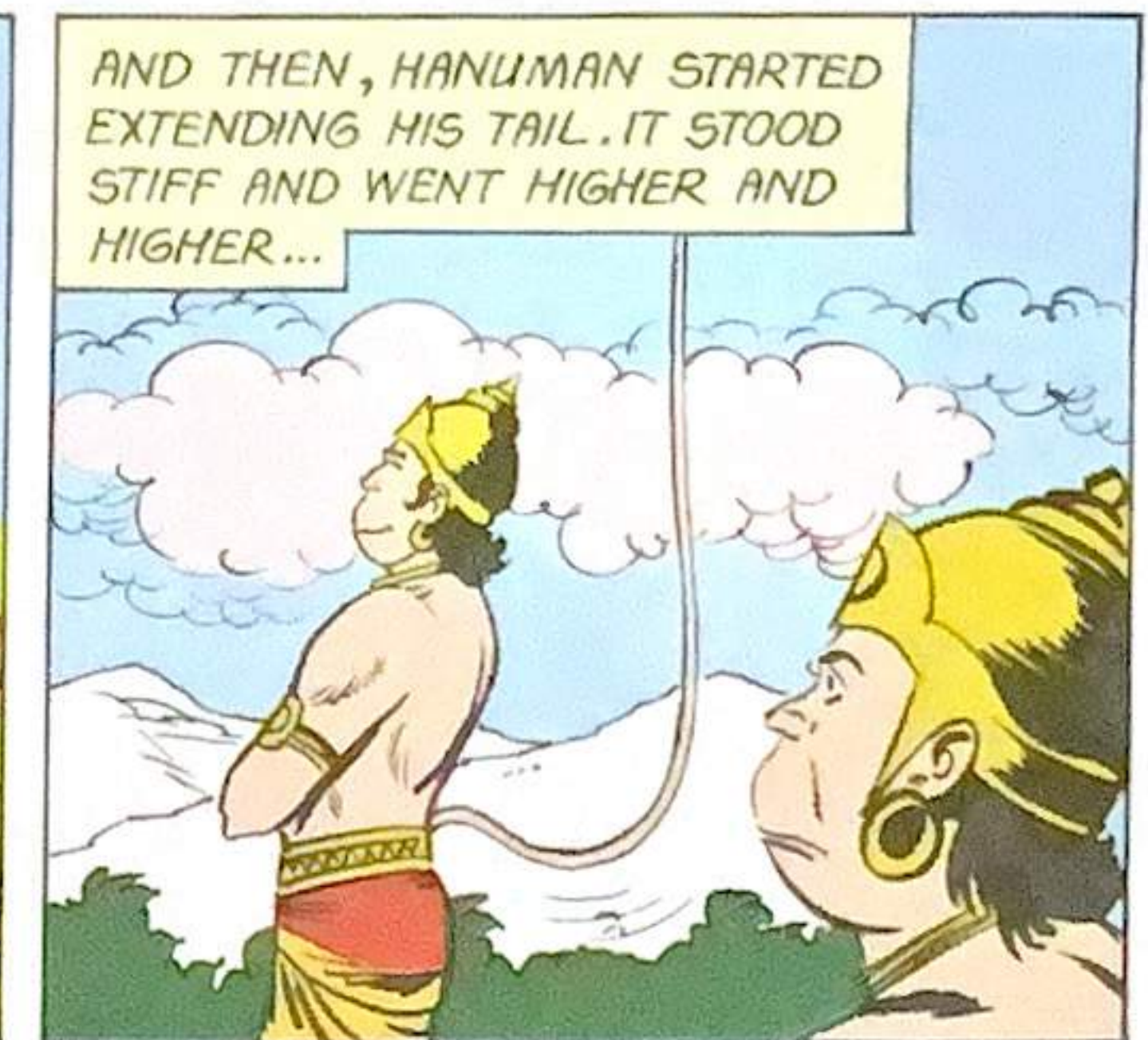
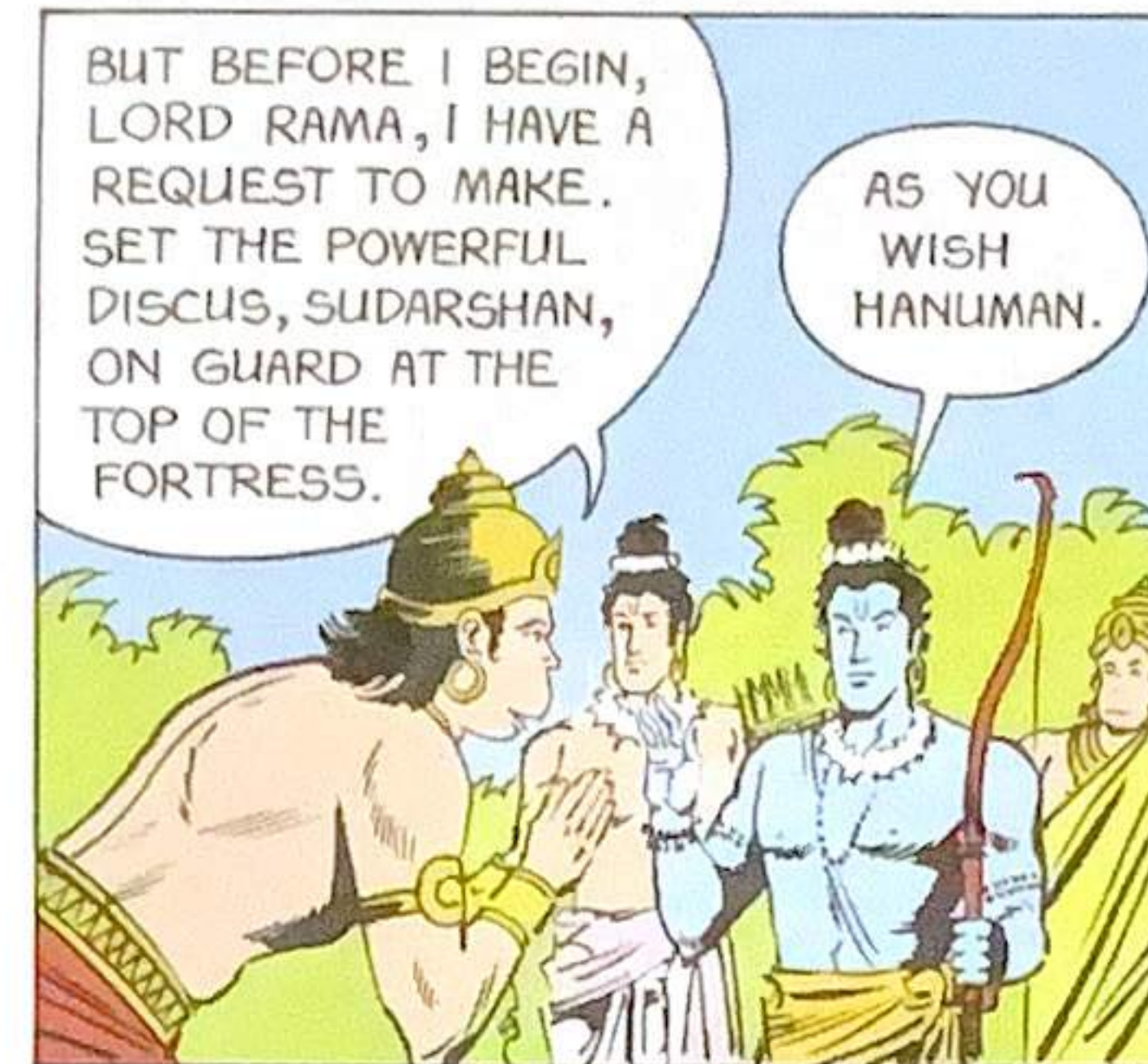
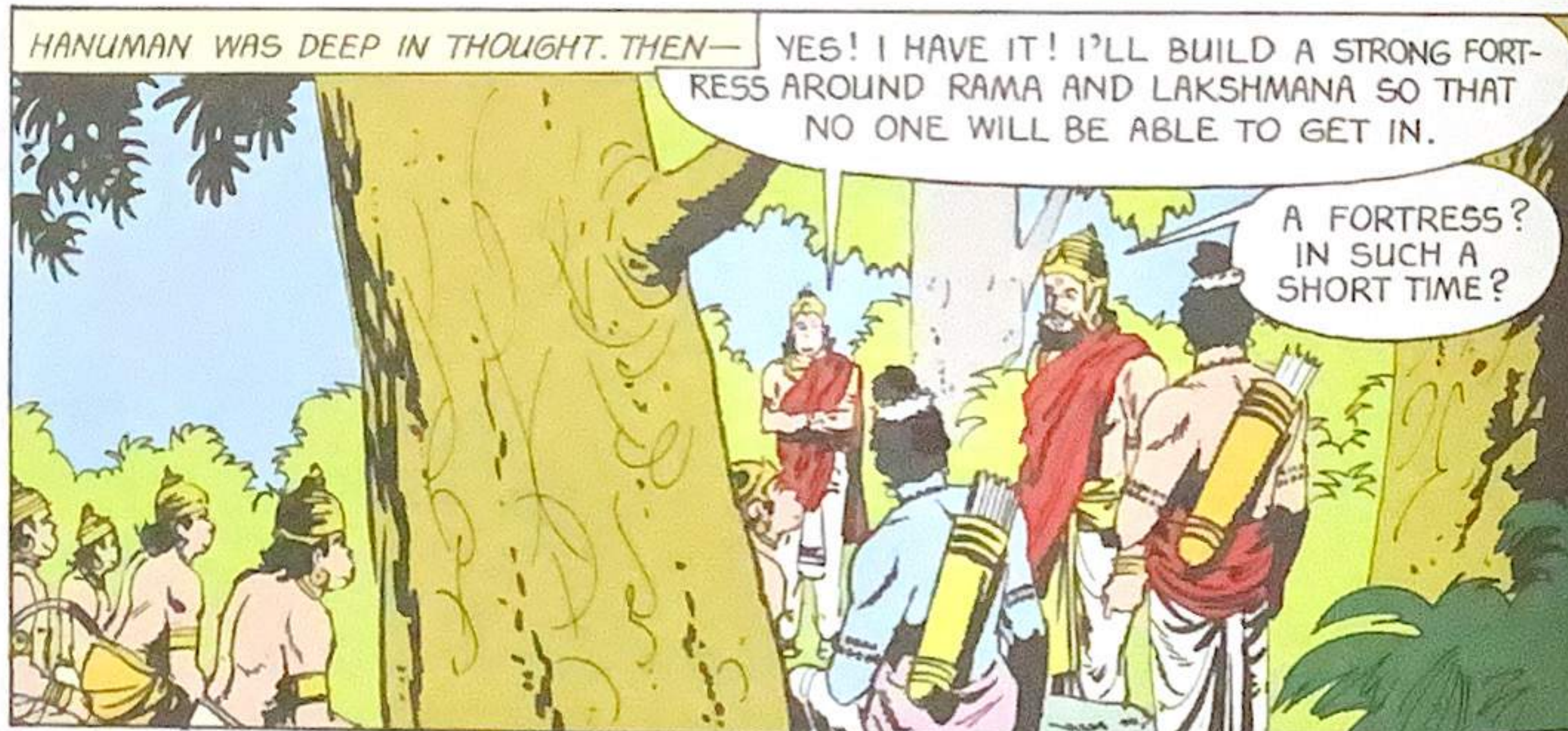
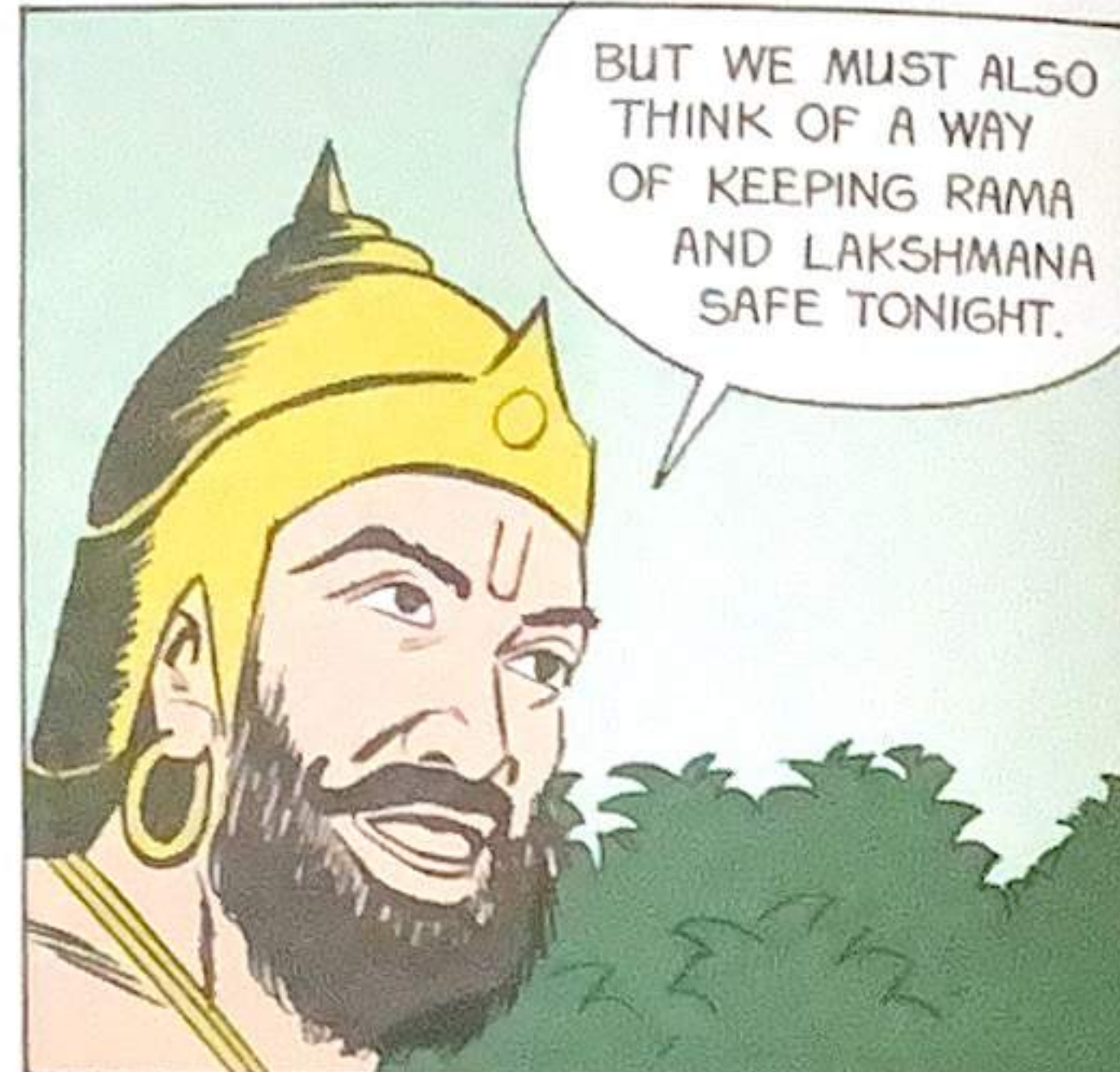
BUT WHAT? GO ON, VIBHEESHANA.



... IT'S HIS MAGICAL POWERS WHICH ARE TO BE FEARED MOST. HE IS A WILY PERSON. ONE CANNOT FORETELL HIS PLANS.

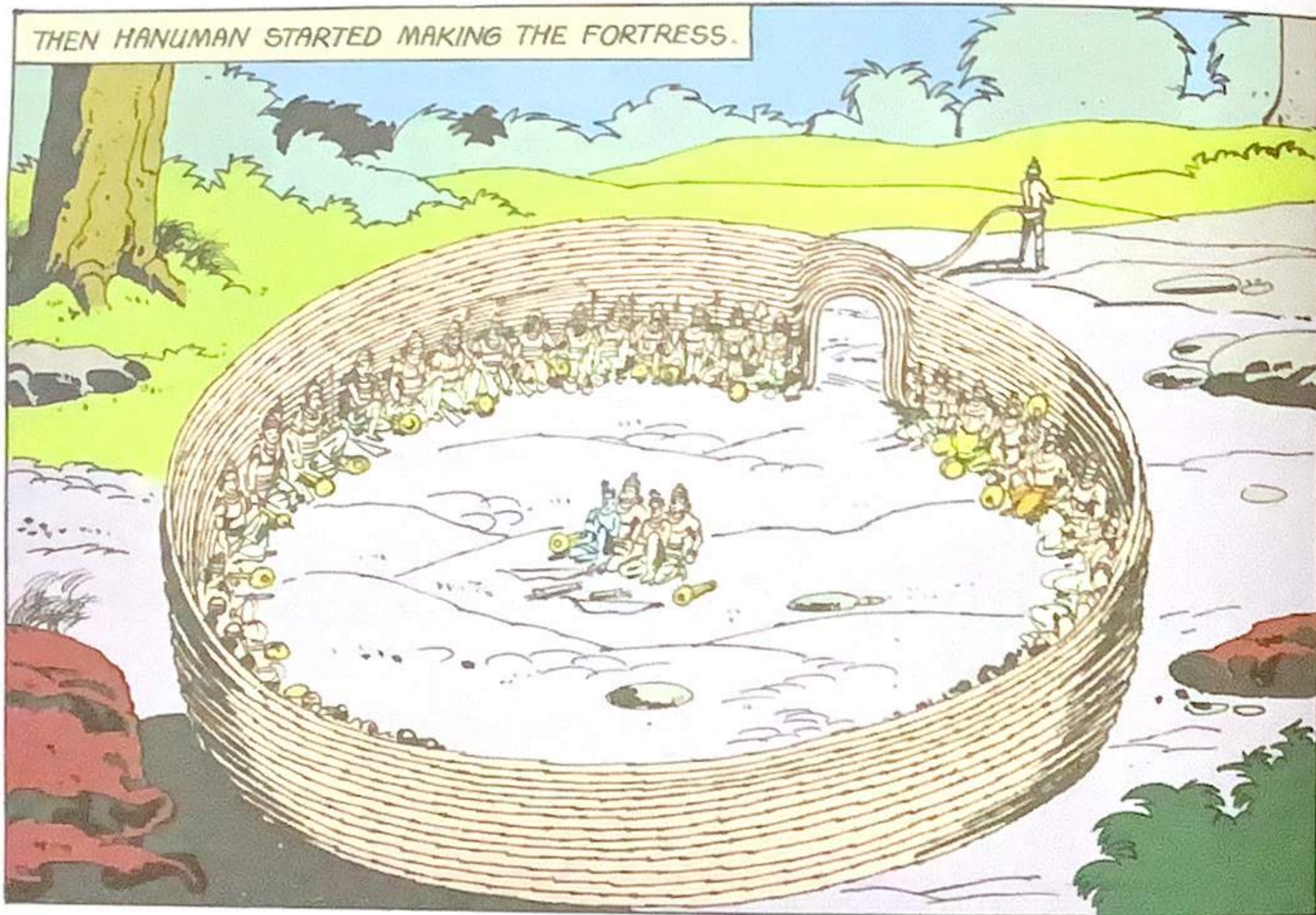
I SEE....



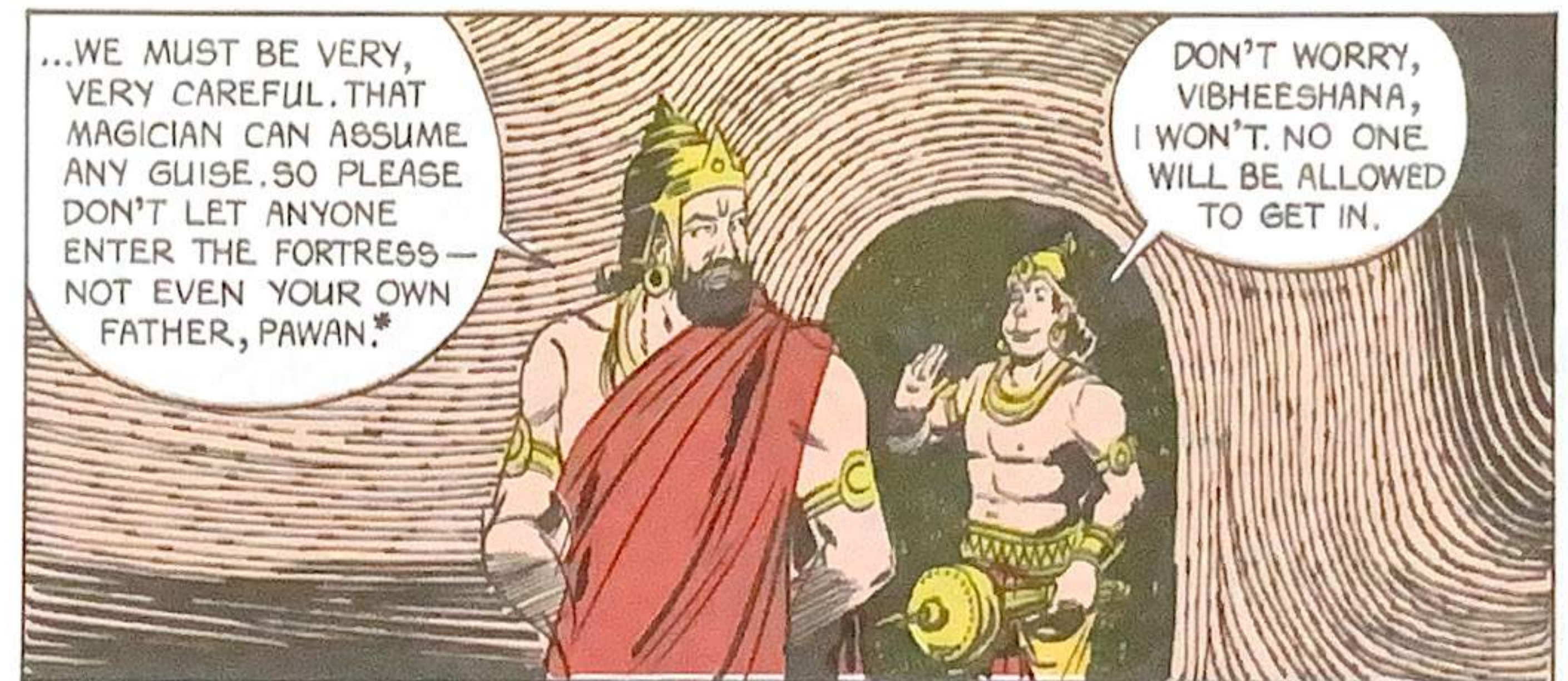
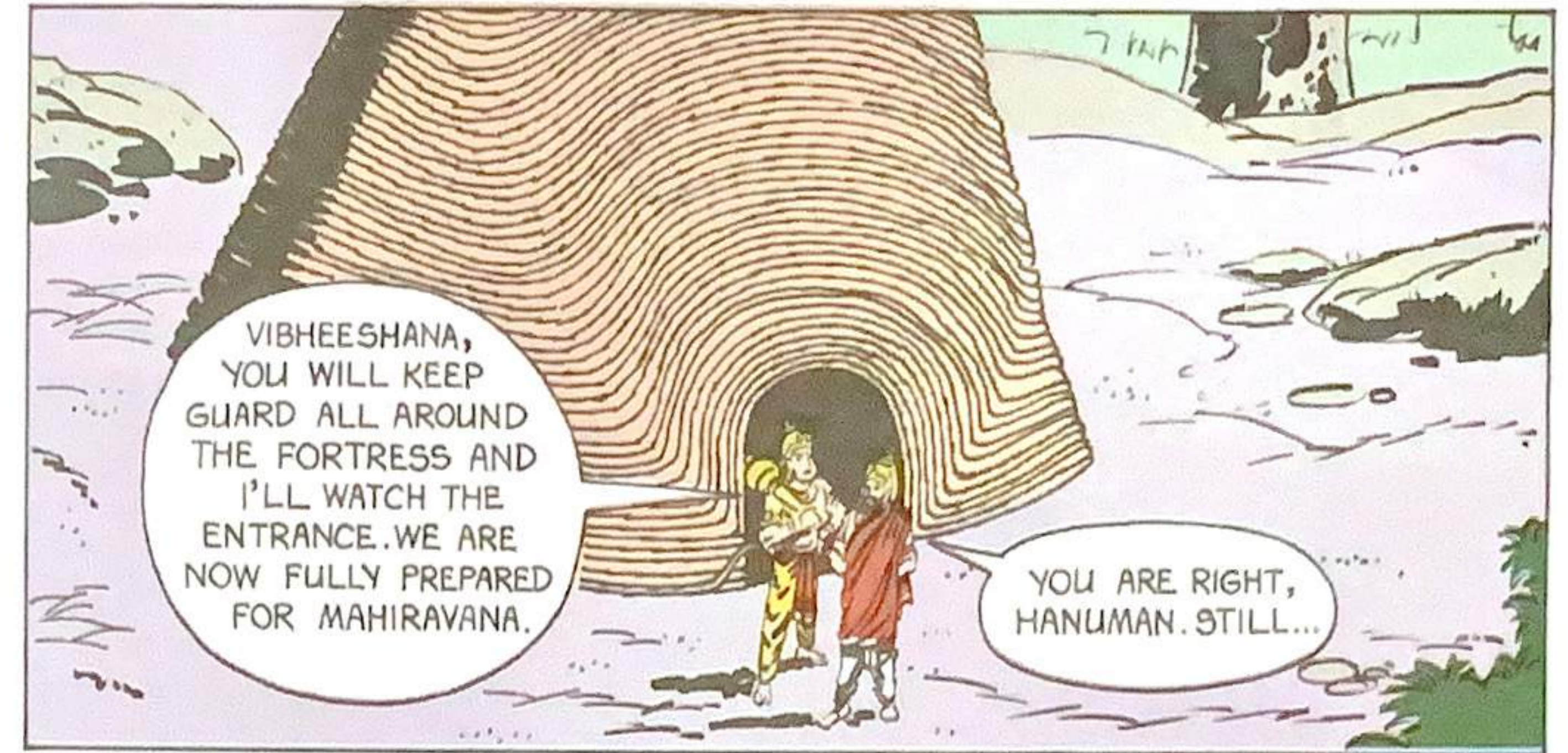
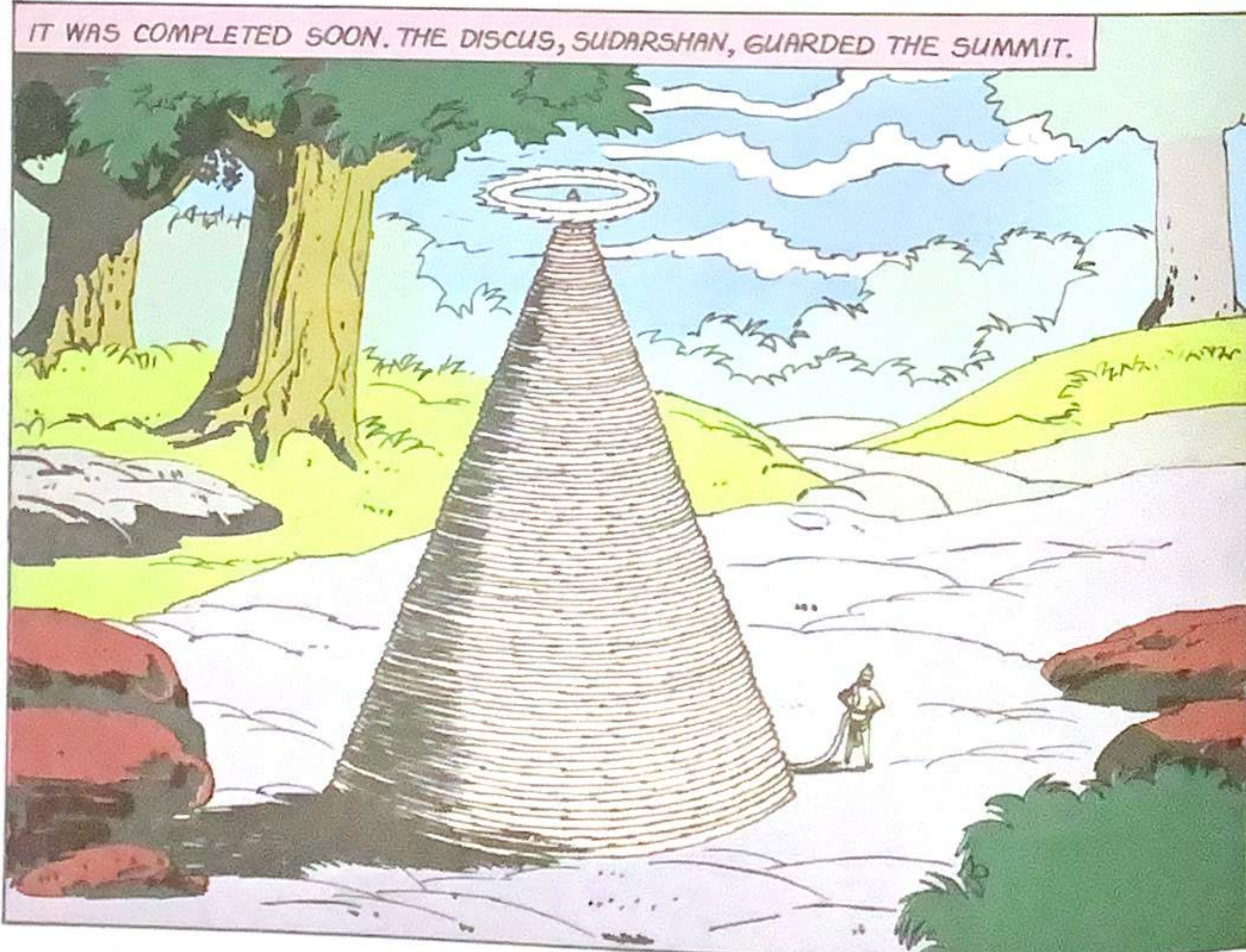




THEN HANUMAN STARTED MAKING THE FORTRESS.



IT WAS COMPLETED SOON. THE DISCUS, SUDARSHAN, GUARDED THE SUMMIT.





MEANWHILE, IN LANKA, RAVANA AND MAHIRAVANA WERE NOT IDLE. THEY, TOO, WERE MAKING CAREFUL PLANS.

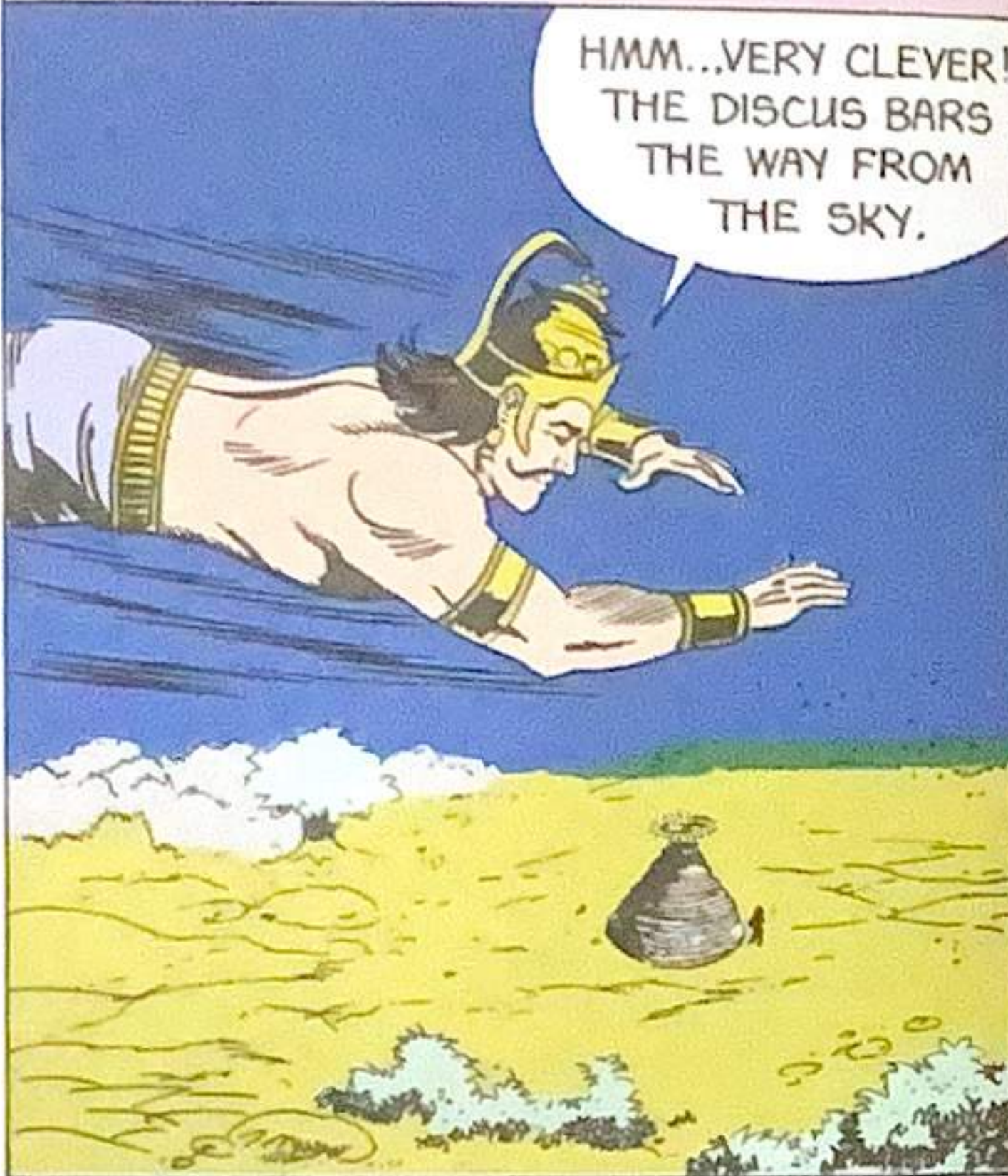
NOW FATHER, LEAVE EVERYTHING TO ME. I'LL TAKE RAMA AND LAKSHMANA AWAY TO THE NETHER WORLD AND SACRIFICE THEM THERE TO THE GODDESS, DURGA.

YOU HAVE TAKEN A LOAD OFF MY CHEST, SON.



MAHIRAVANA DEPARTED. HE TOOK NO MEN, NO HORSES AND NO WEAPONS. ENDOWED AS HE WAS WITH MAGIC POWERS, WITHIN MINUTES HE HAD REACHED RAMA'S CAMP.

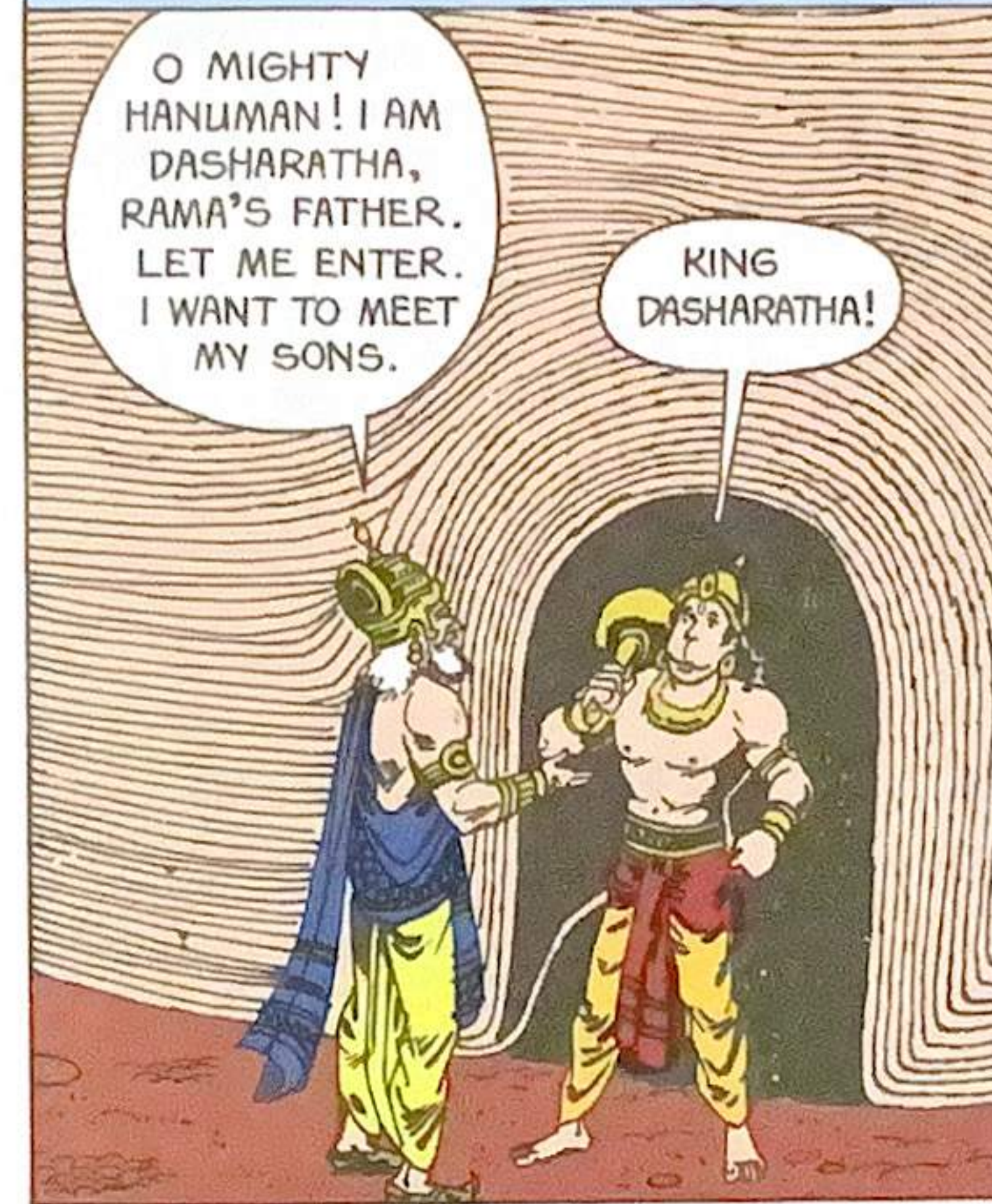
HMM...VERY CLEVER! THE DISCUS BARS THE WAY FROM THE SKY.



BUT SOON AFTER VIBHEESHANA LEFT—

O MIGHTY HANUMAN! I AM DASHARATHA, RAMA'S FATHER. LET ME ENTER. I WANT TO MEET MY SONS.

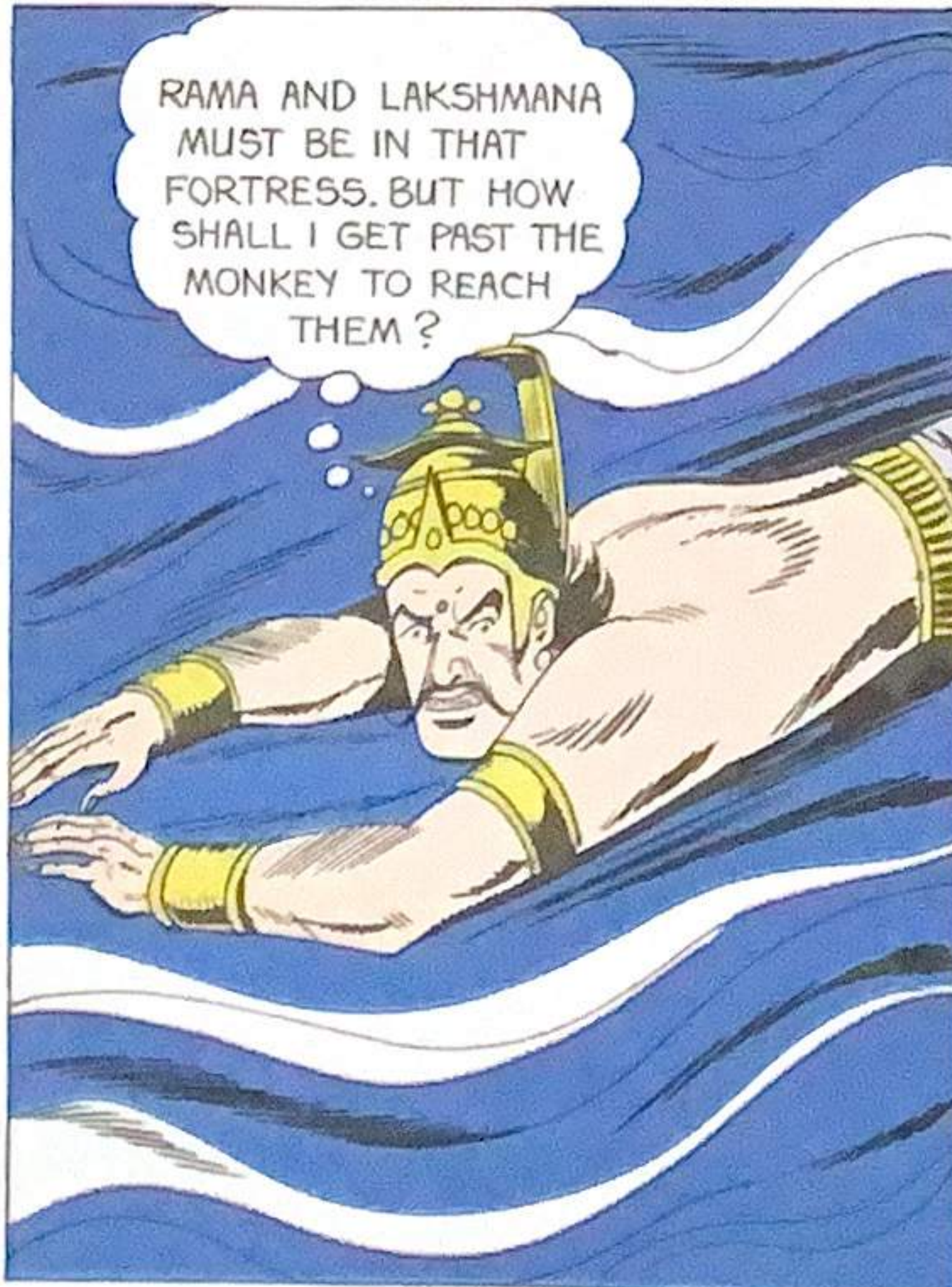
KING DASHARATHA!



PLEASE WAIT FOR A MINUTE, MY LORD. VIBHEESHANA WILL SOON BE COMING THIS WAY AND WILL TAKE YOU IN.

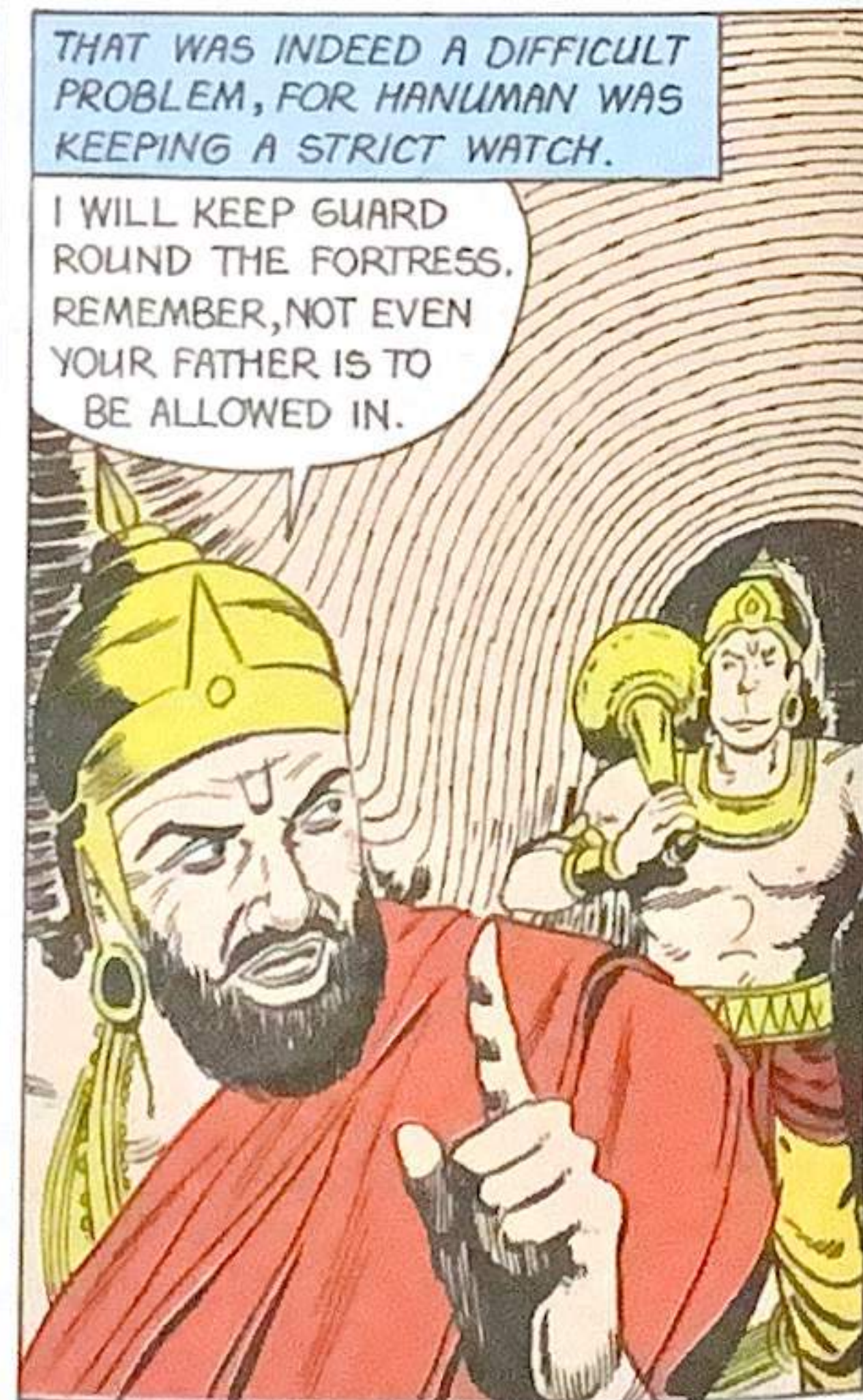


RAMA AND LAKSHMANA MUST BE IN THAT FORTRESS. BUT HOW SHALL I GET PAST THE MONKEY TO REACH THEM?



THAT WAS INDEED A DIFFICULT PROBLEM, FOR HANUMAN WAS KEEPING A STRICT WATCH.

I WILL KEEP GUARD ROUND THE FORTRESS. REMEMBER, NOT EVEN YOUR FATHER IS TO BE ALLOWED IN.



AH! HERE HE COMES.

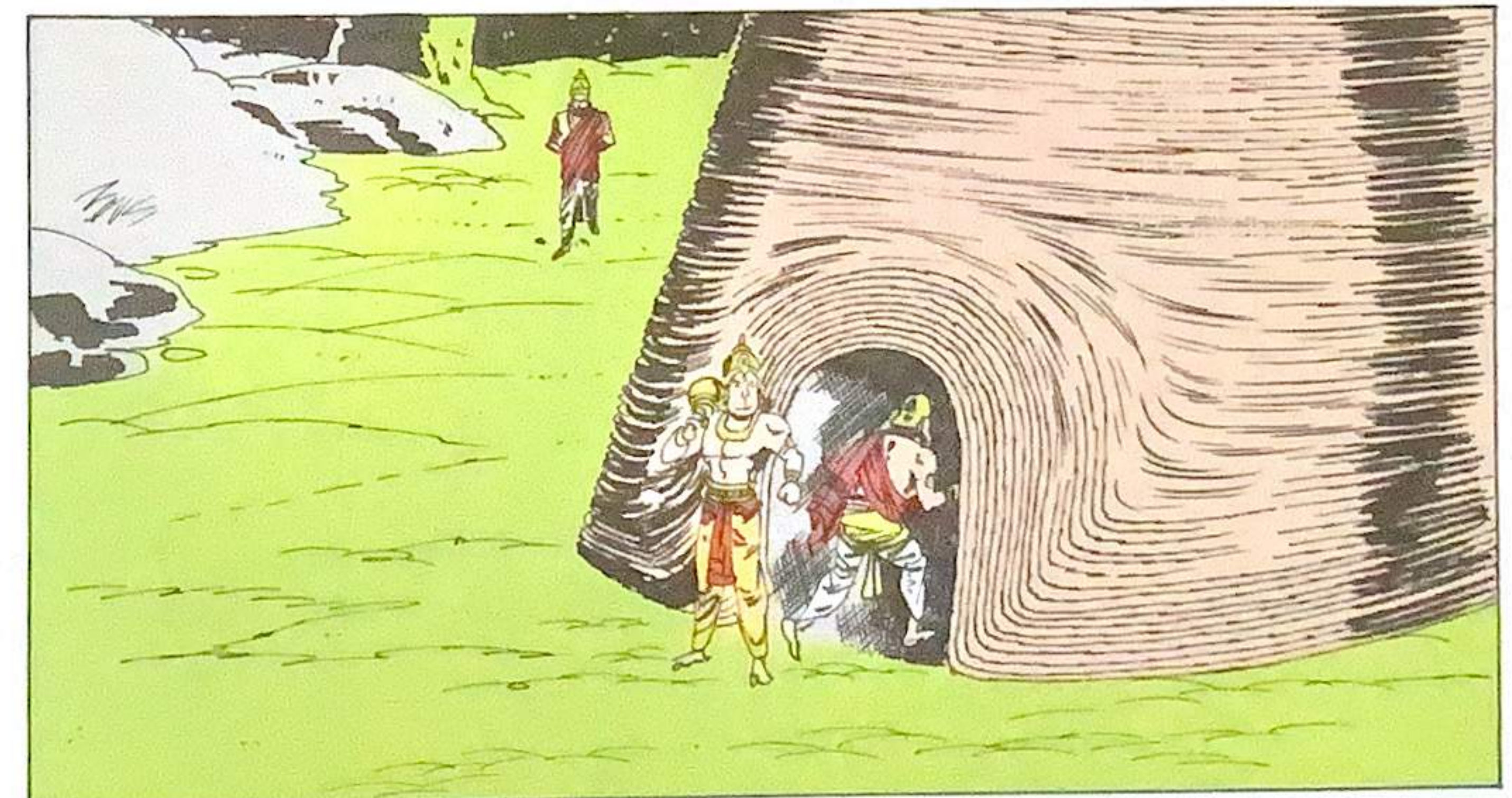
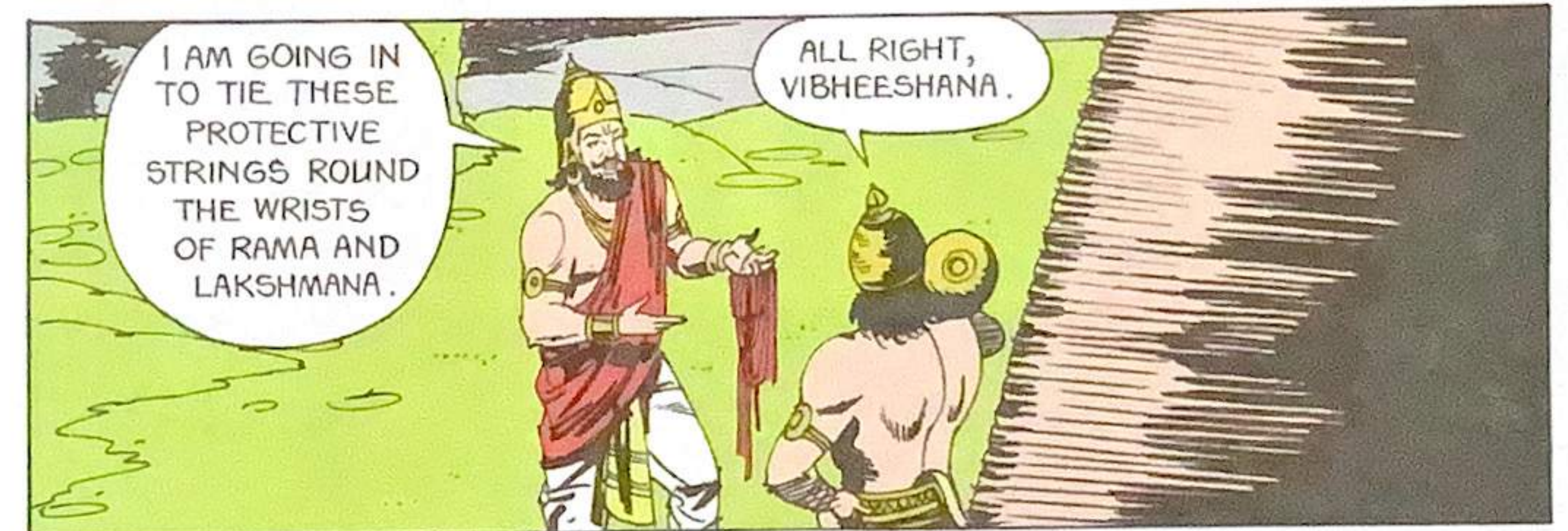
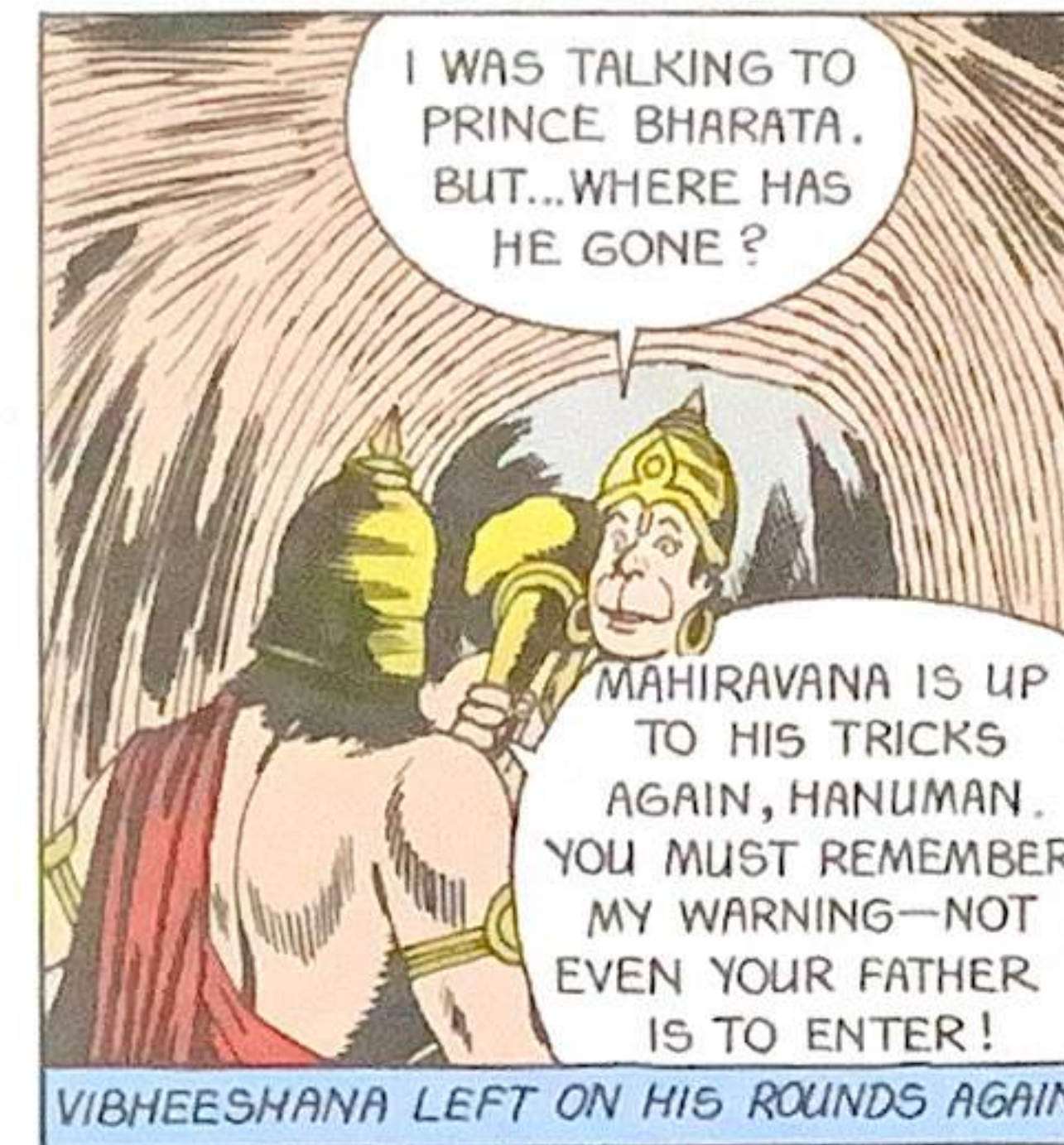
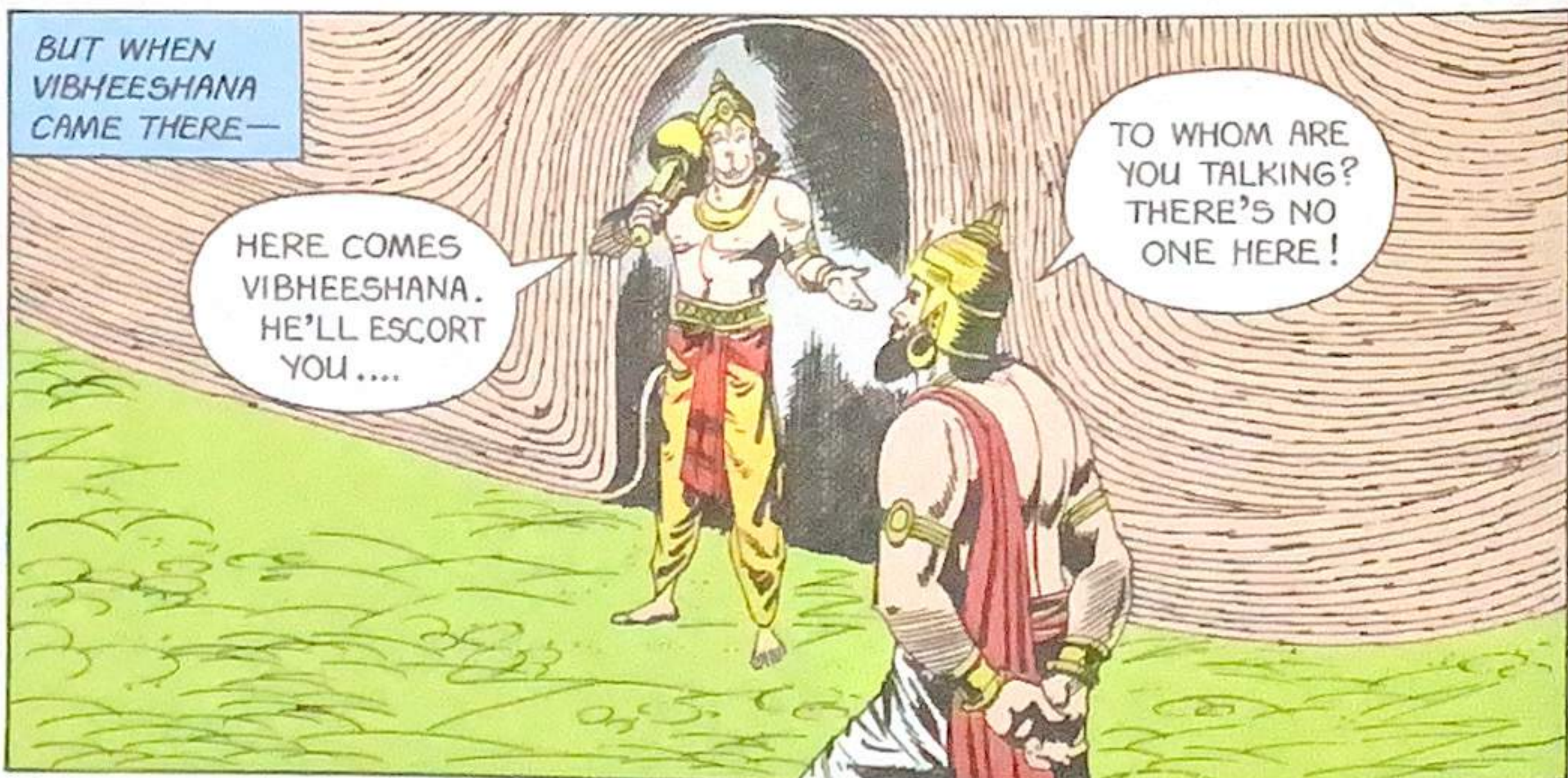
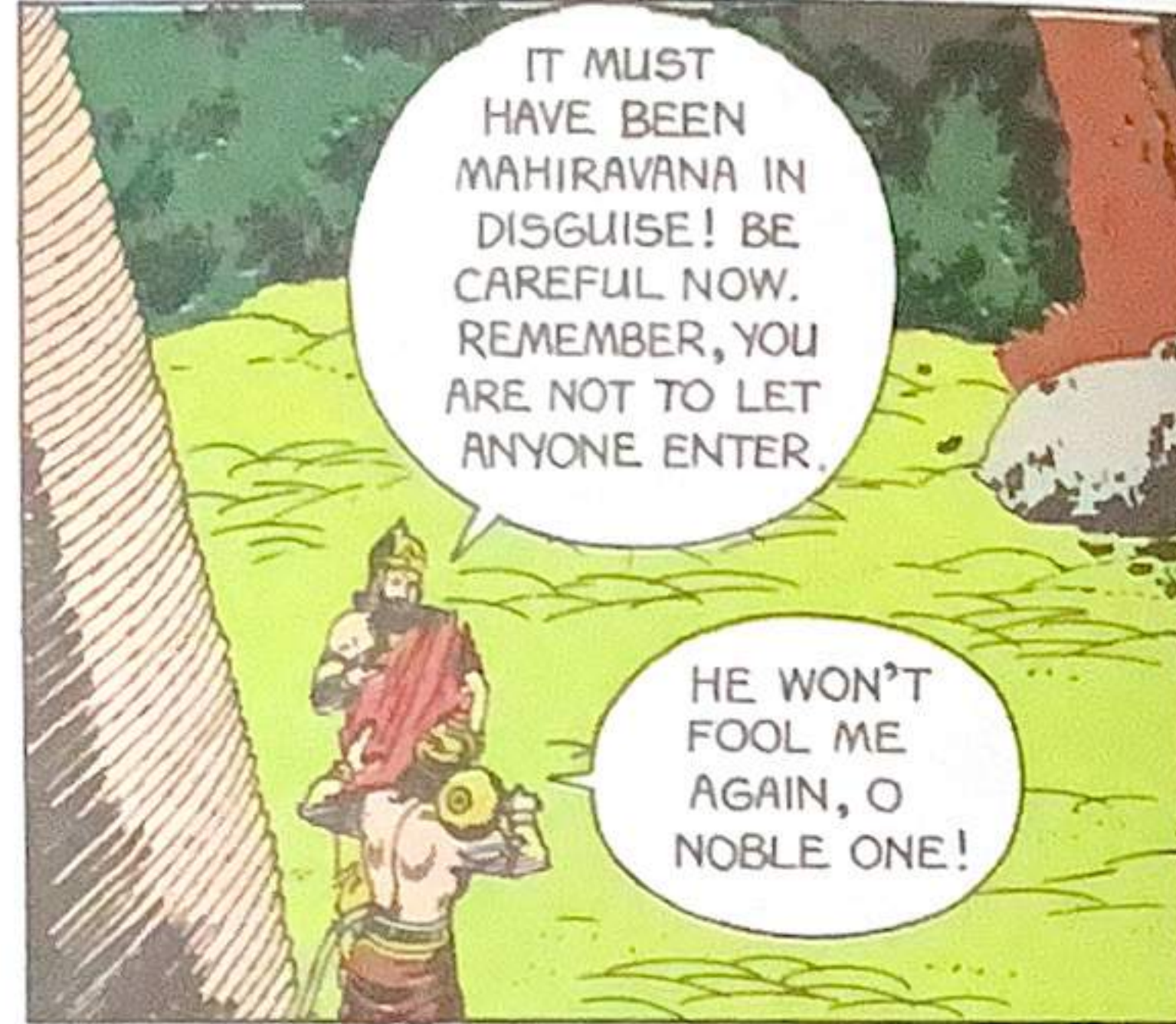


KING DASHARATHA IS HERE, VIBHEESHANA, TO MEET HIS SONS.

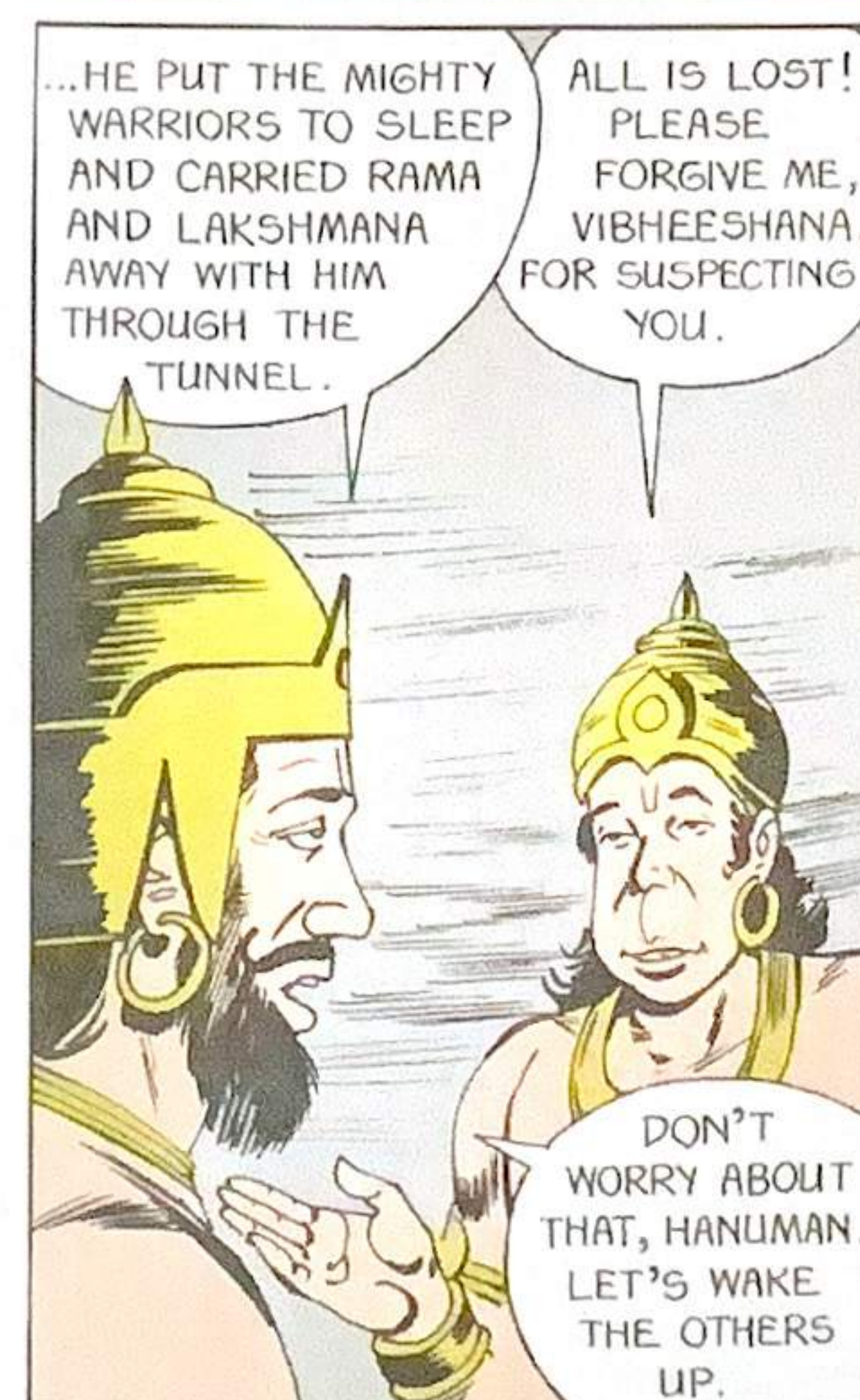
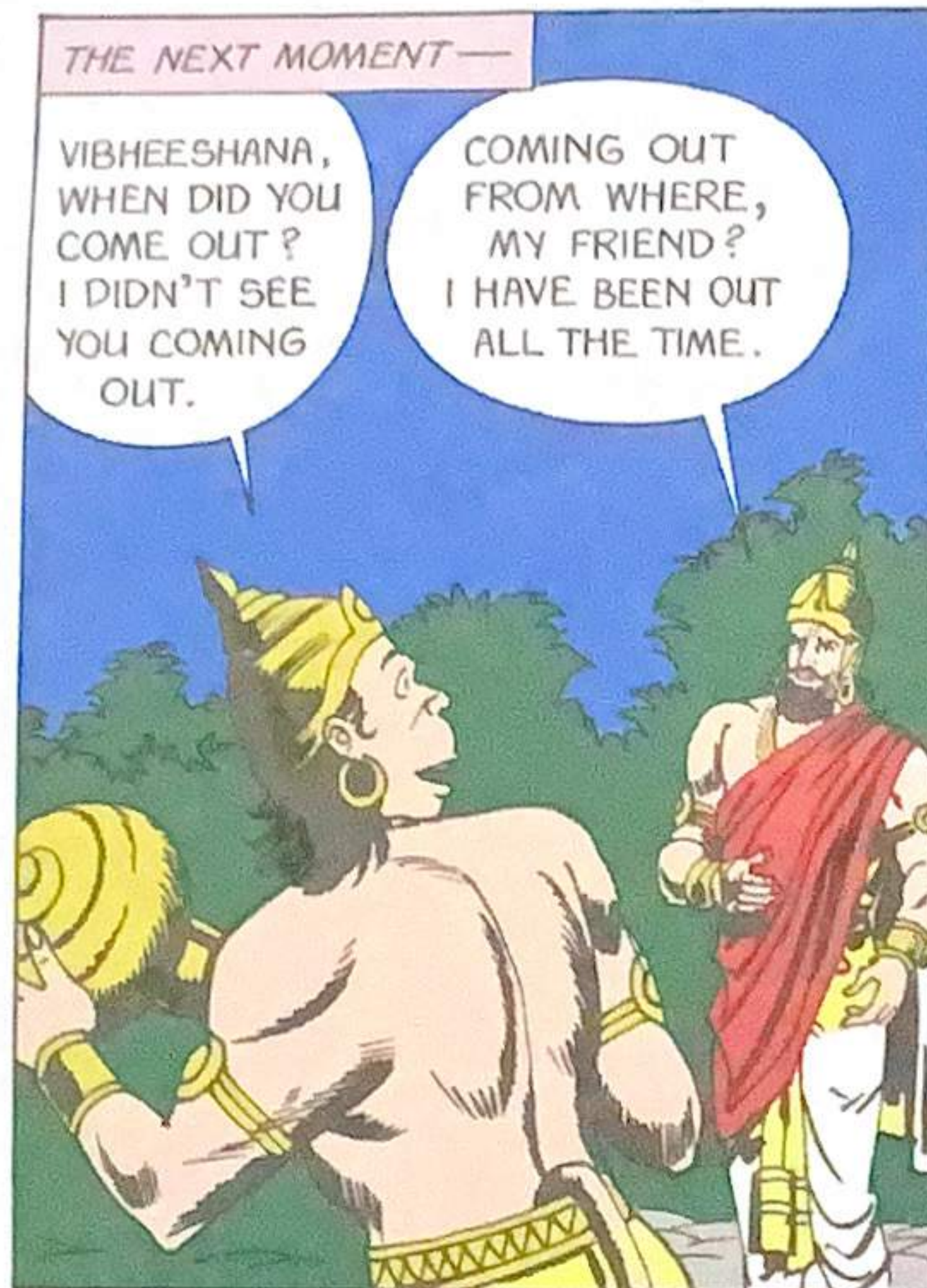
KING DASHARATHA? I SEE NO ONE HERE!











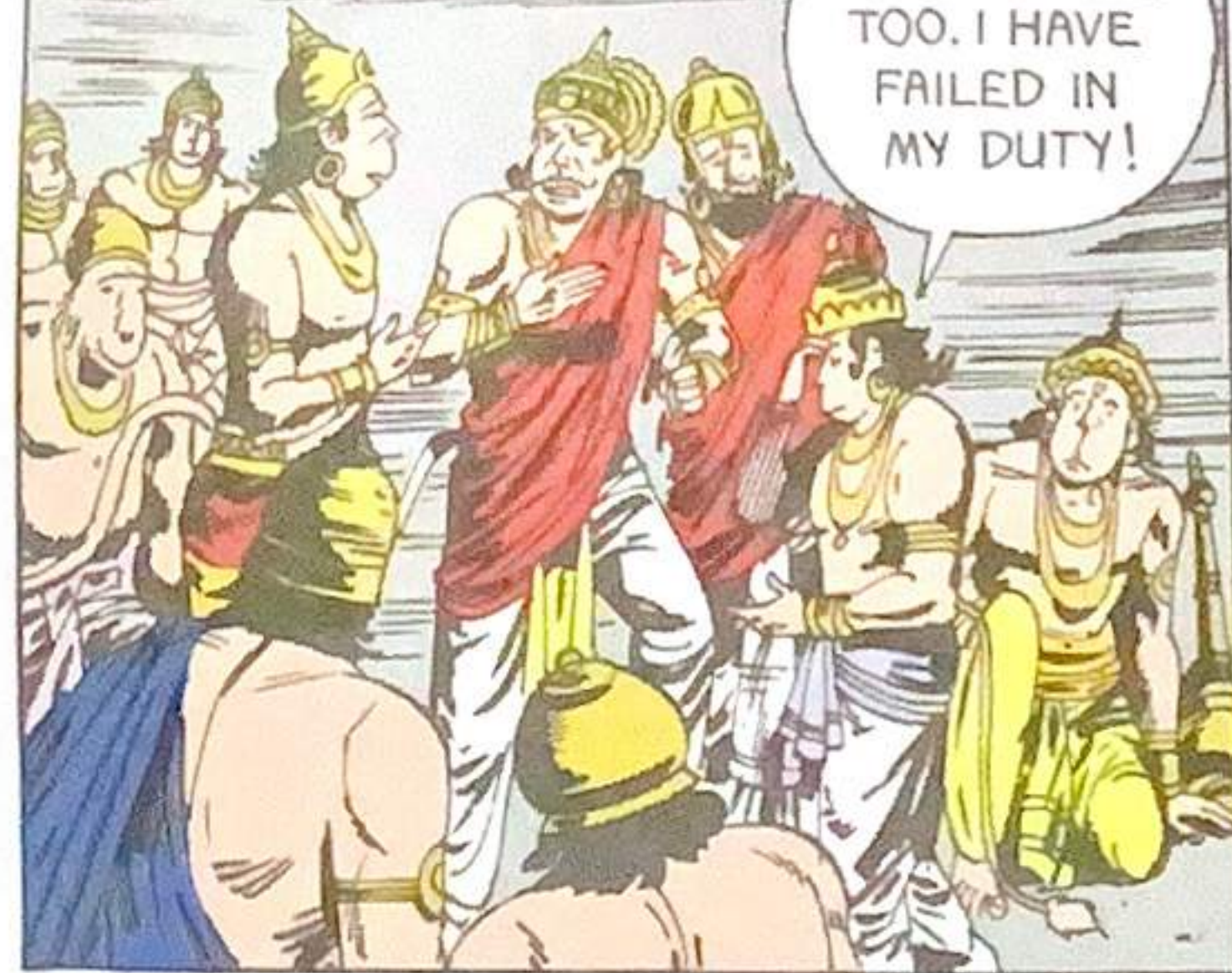


SOON, EVERYONE WAS WIDE AWAKE.

O KING SUGREEVA!  
RAMA AND LAKSHMANA  
HAVE BEEN CARRIED  
AWAY BY MAHIRAVANA.  
I AM NOT FIT TO LIVE!  
IT WAS ALL MY  
FAULT.

NO! AS YOUR  
KING, THE  
BLAME MUST  
FALL ON ME.

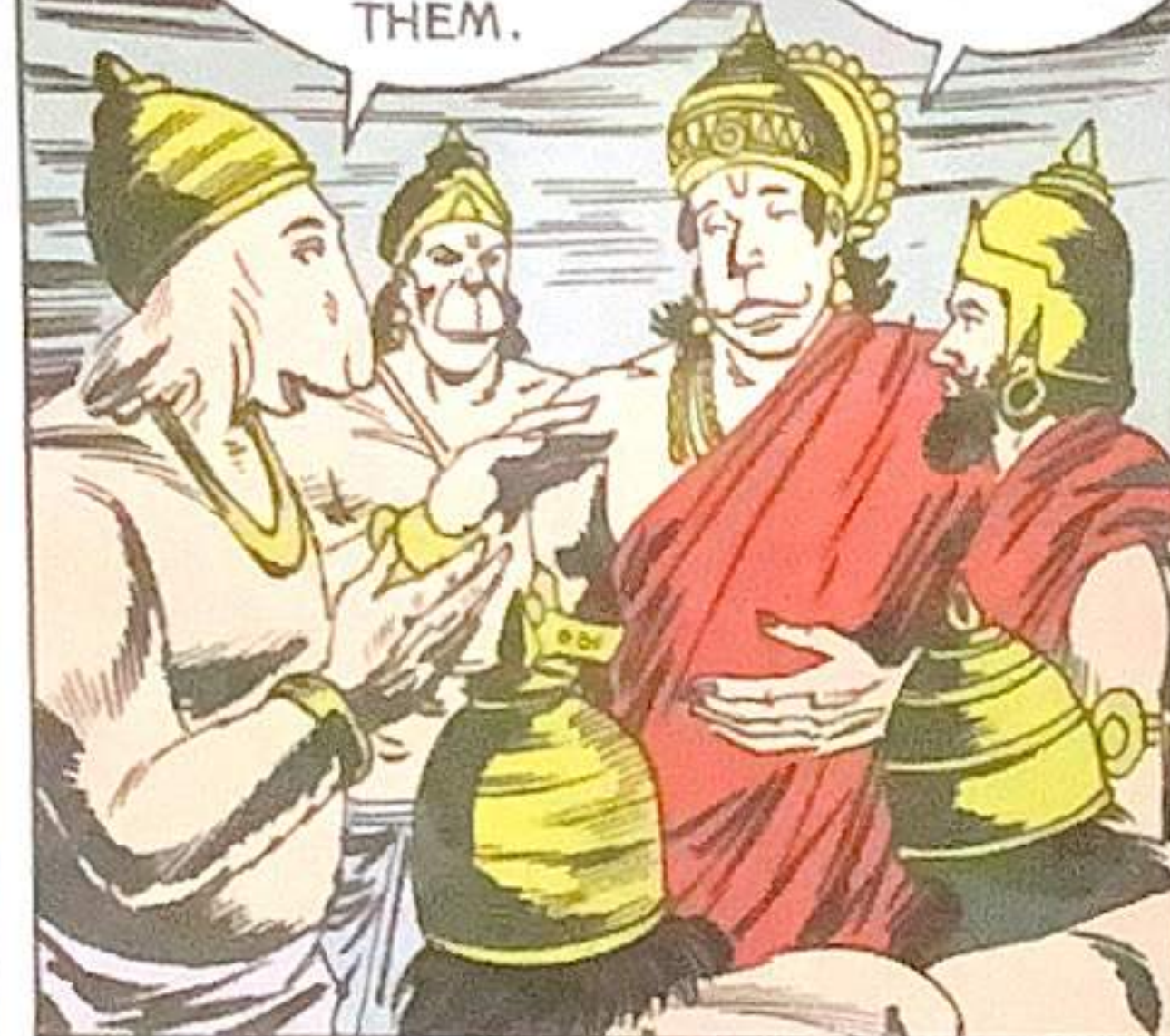
—AND ON ME  
TOO. I HAVE  
FAILED IN  
MY DUTY!



THEN JAMBAVAN, THE WISE ONE, SPOKE OUT.

THE BLAME MUST  
BE SHARED EQUALLY  
BY ALL OF US. BUT WHY  
WASTE TIME? LET US  
THINK OF A WAY  
OF RESCUING THEM.  
HANUMAN SHOULD  
GO AND FIND  
THEM.

YES.  
IF ANYONE  
CAN FIND  
THEM, IT IS  
HANUMAN.

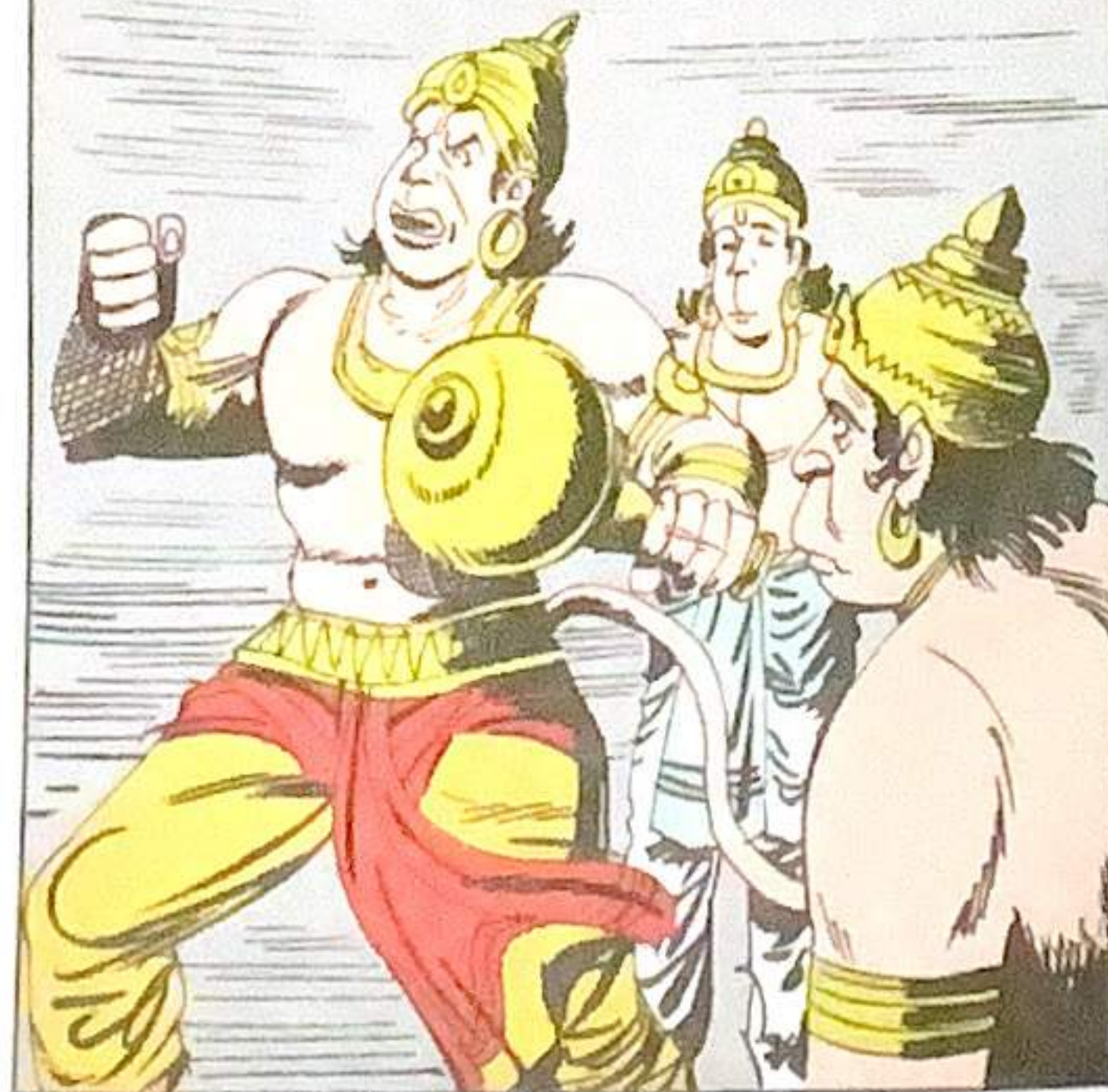


O HANUMAN, YOU  
CROSSED THE  
MIGHTY OCEAN TO  
RESCUE SITA. ONLY  
YOU CAN PERFORM  
THIS TASK NOW.  
WE DEPEND  
UPON YOU.

MY HEAD BOWS  
LOW WITH  
SHAME, MY LORD,  
FOR I LET THE  
DEAR ONES BE  
CARRIED AWAY  
UNDER OUR  
VERY EYES!



TO ATONE I'LL SEARCH  
THE THREE WORLDS  
TILL I FIND THEM,  
FOR WITHOUT THEM  
I CANNOT LIVE.



HANUMAN'S TAIL CAME BACK TO ITS  
NORMAL SIZE. BIDDING THEM FAREWELL,  
HANUMAN ENTERED THE TUNNEL MADE  
BY MAHIRAVANA.



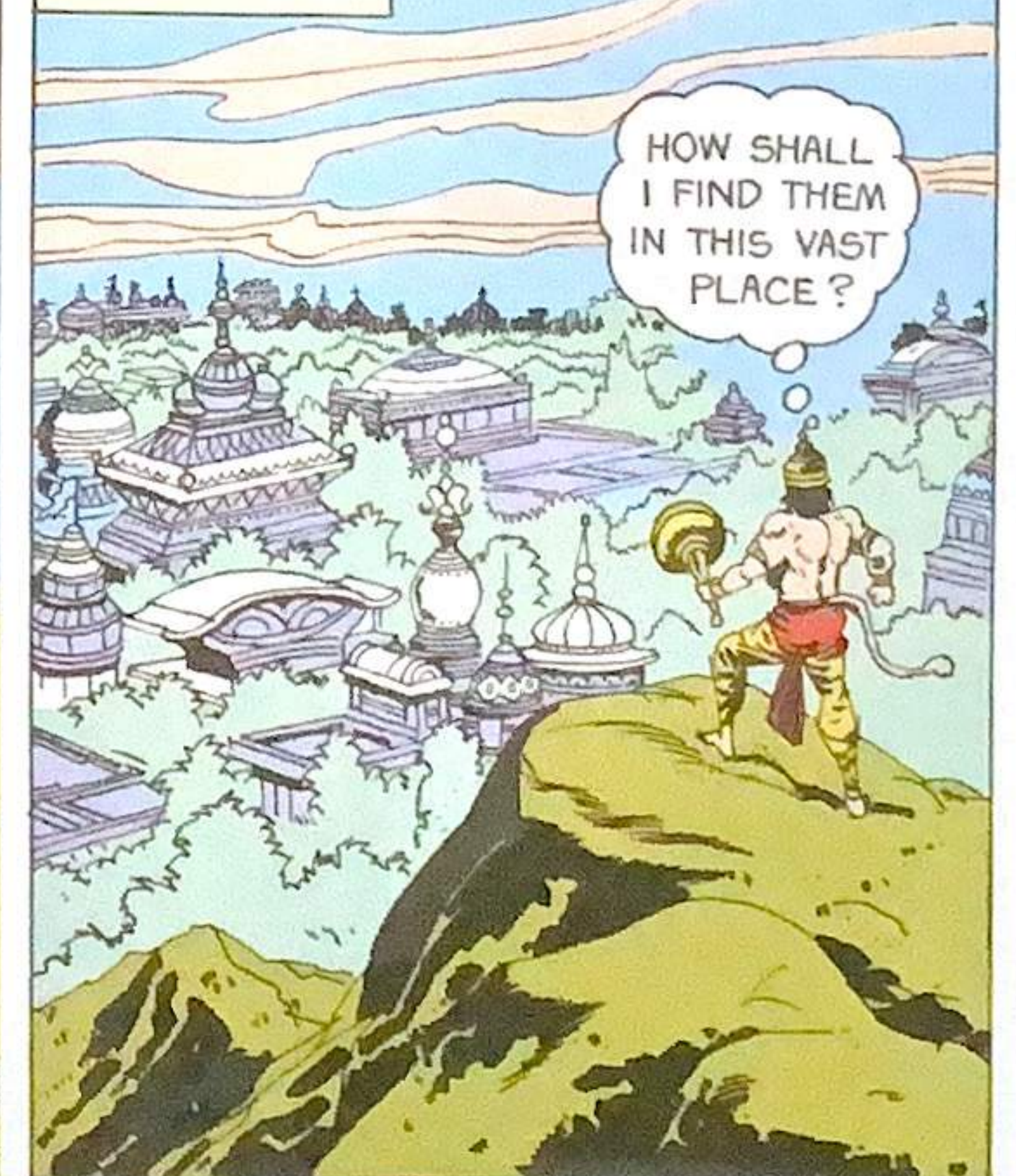
HE TRAVELLED THROUGH  
THE LONG TUNNEL...



...TILL AT LAST HE REACHED THE END.

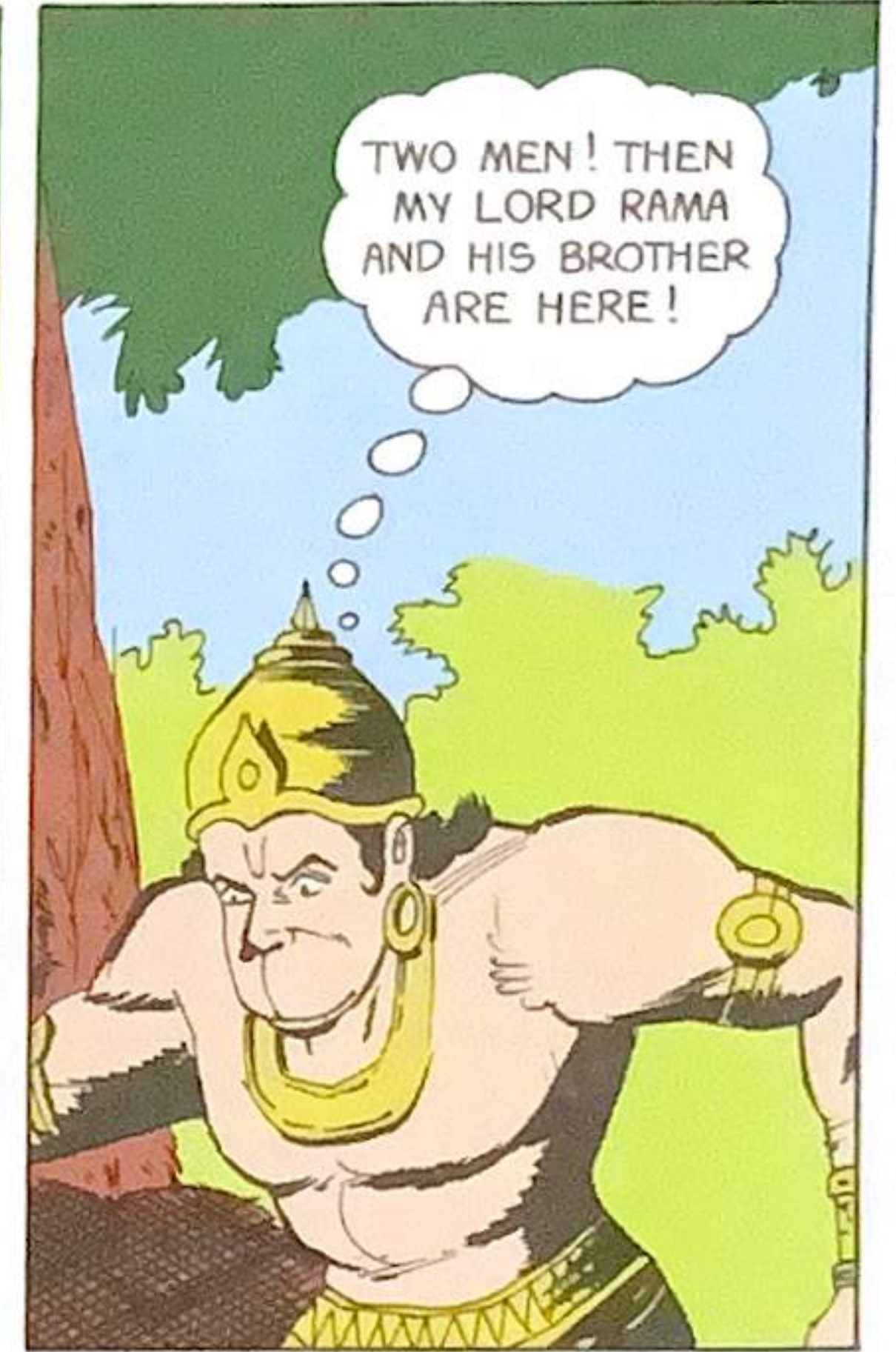
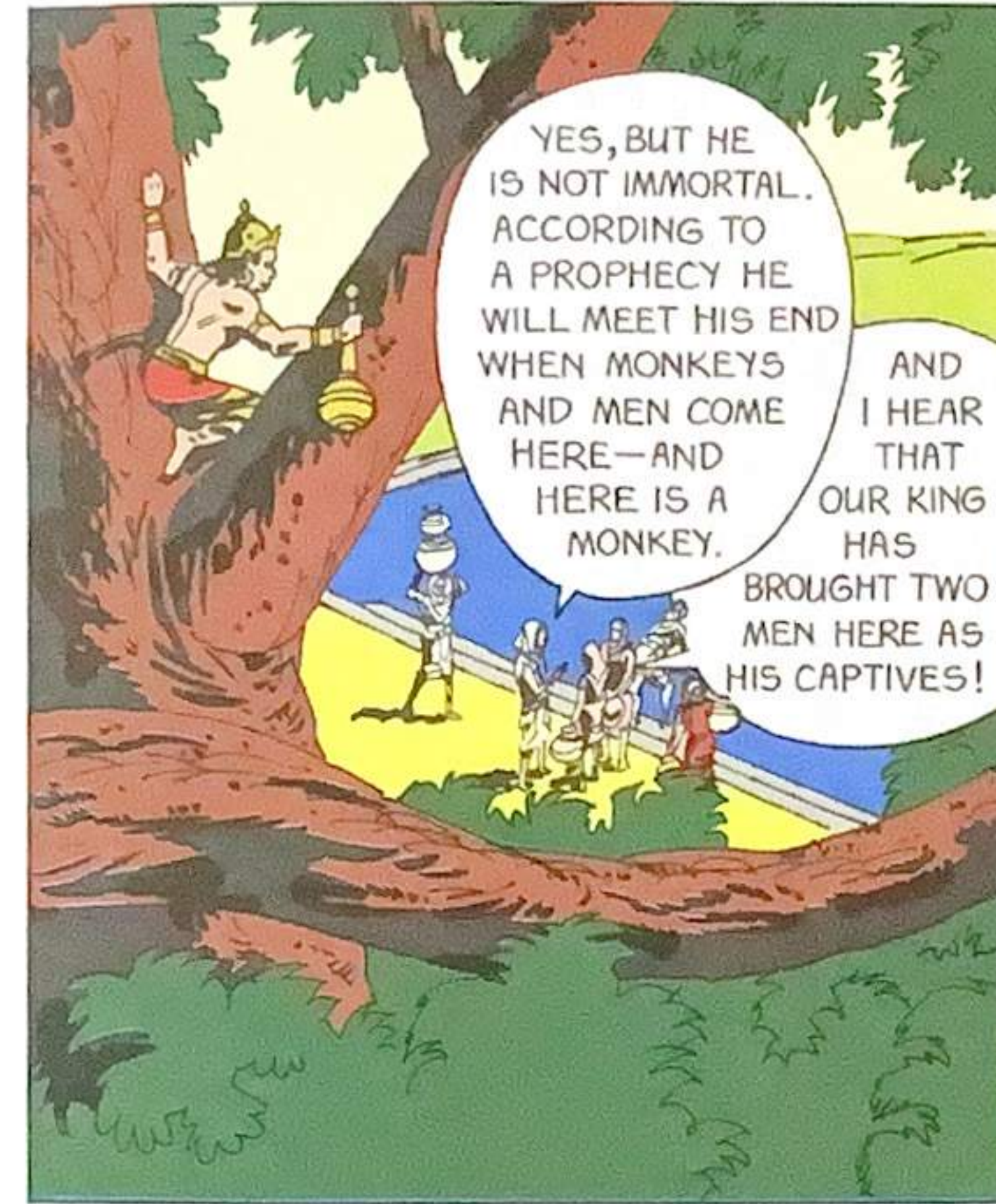
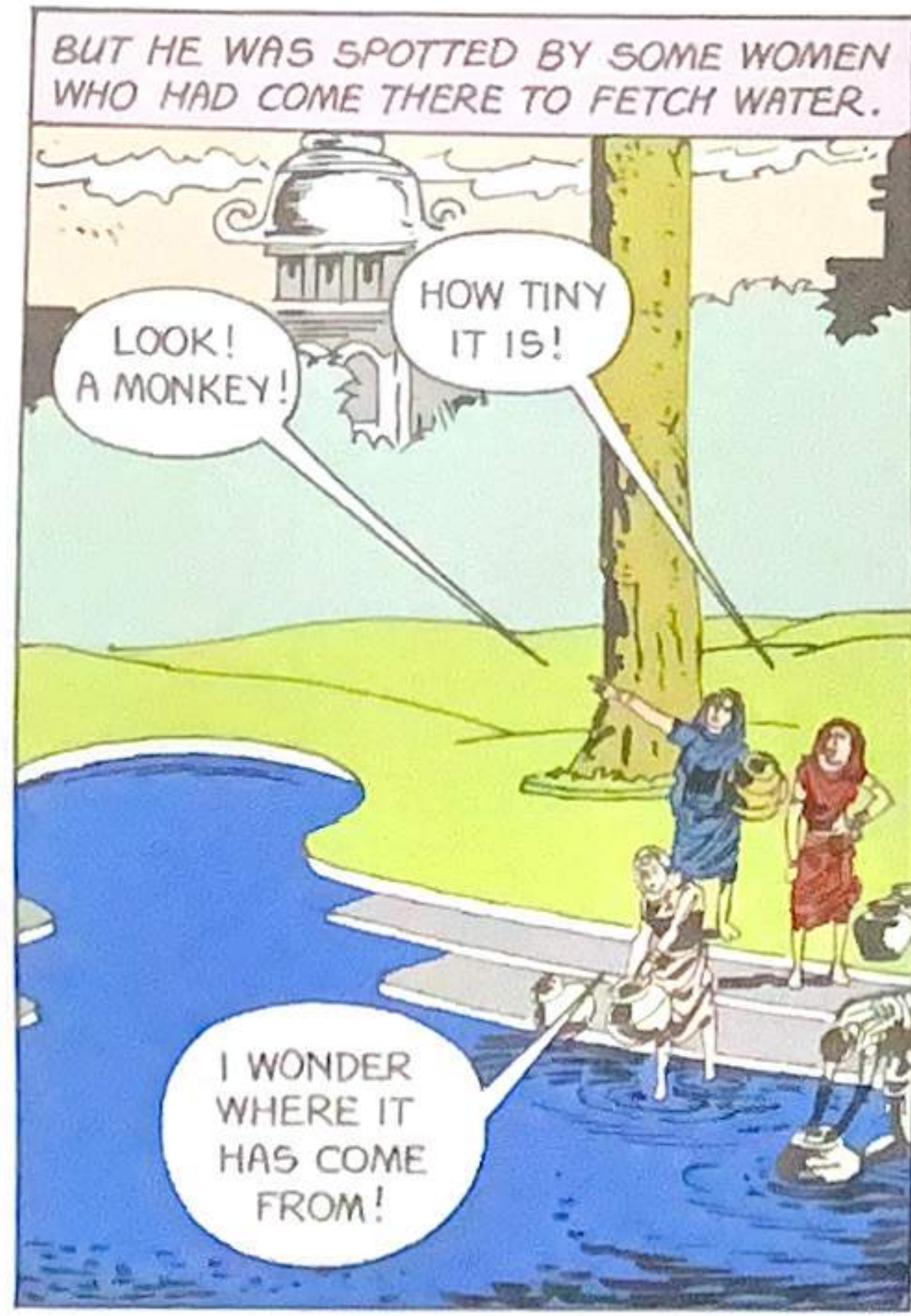
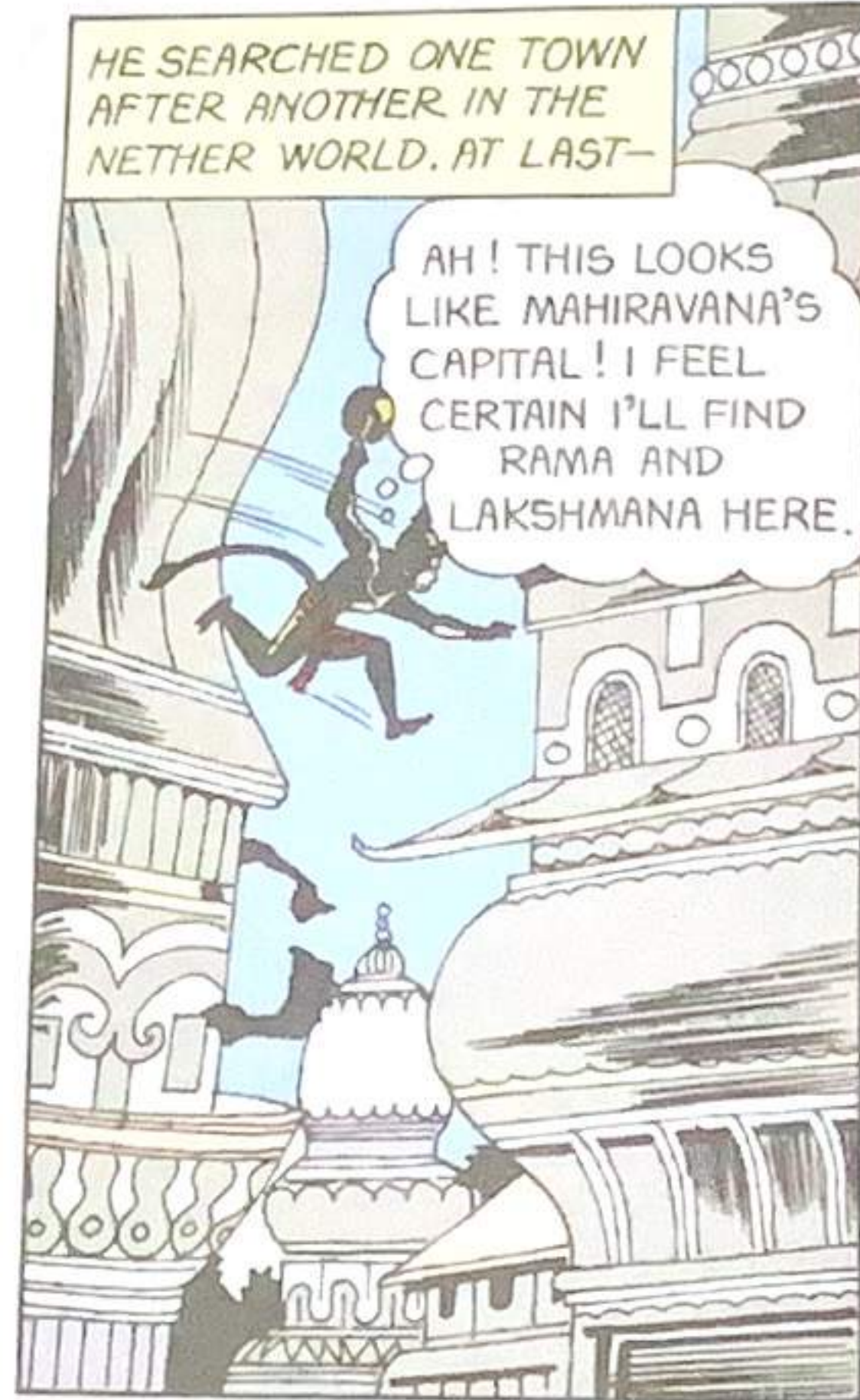


THE NETHER WORLD STRETCHED OUT IN  
FRONT OF HIM.

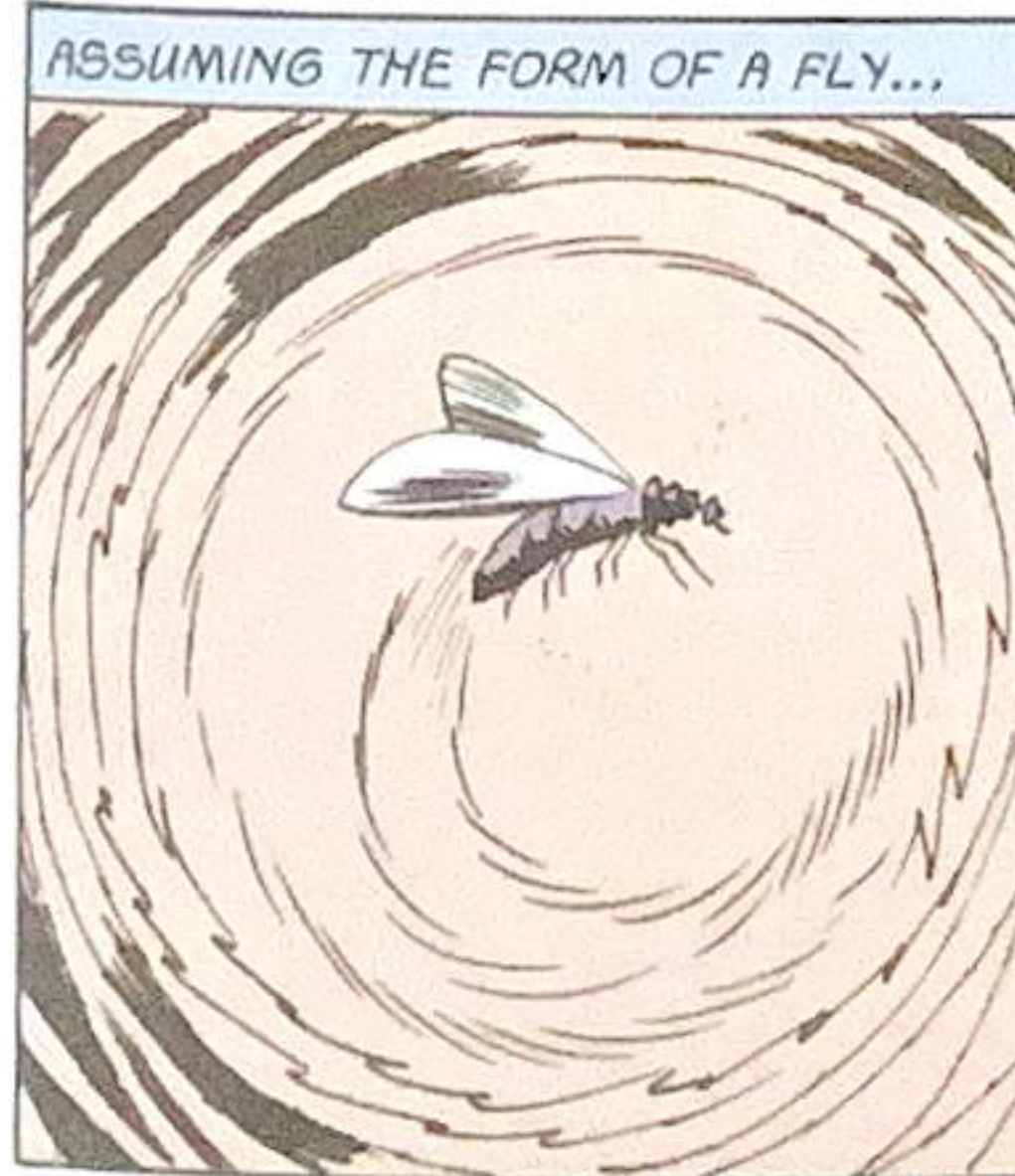
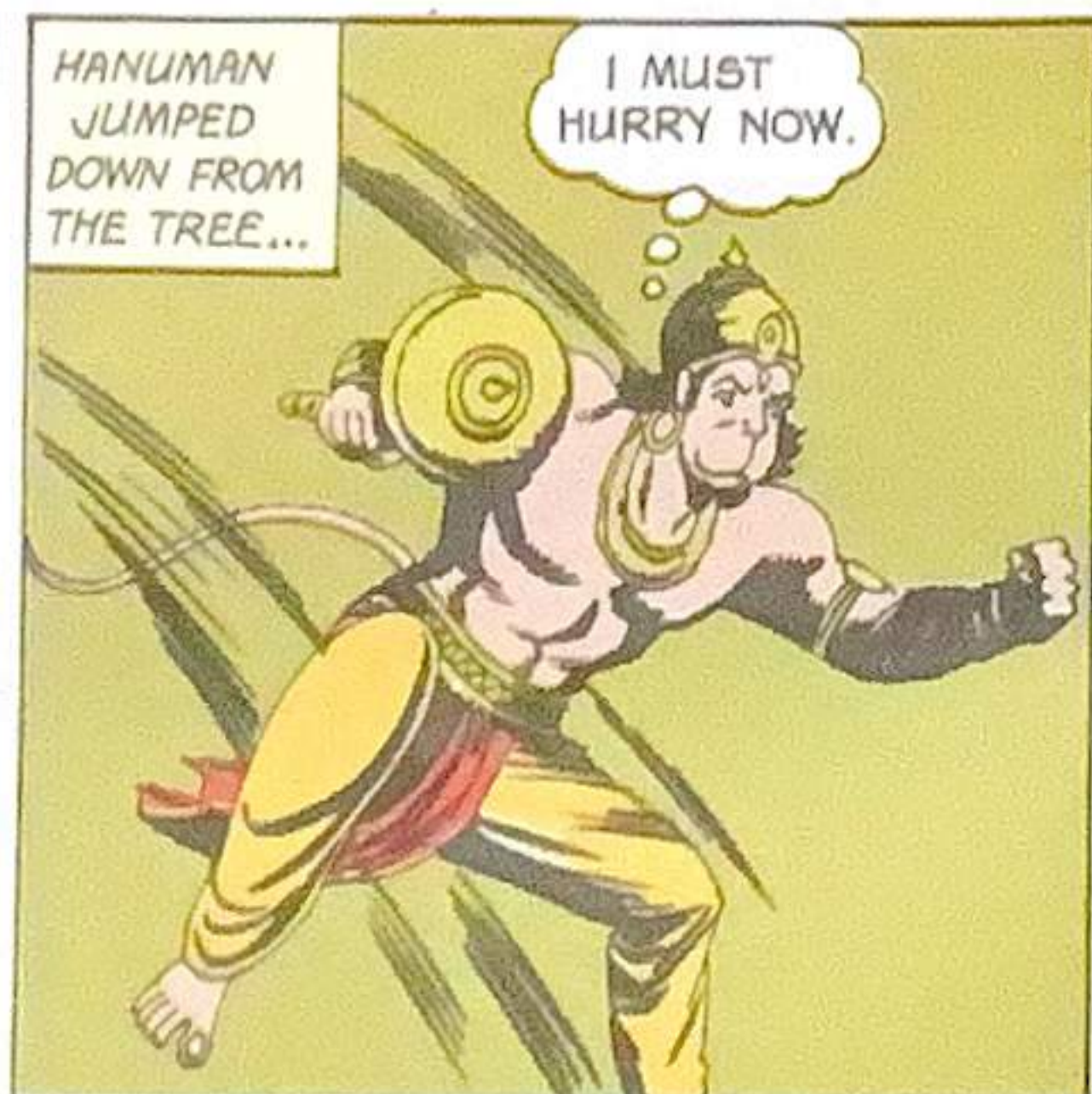
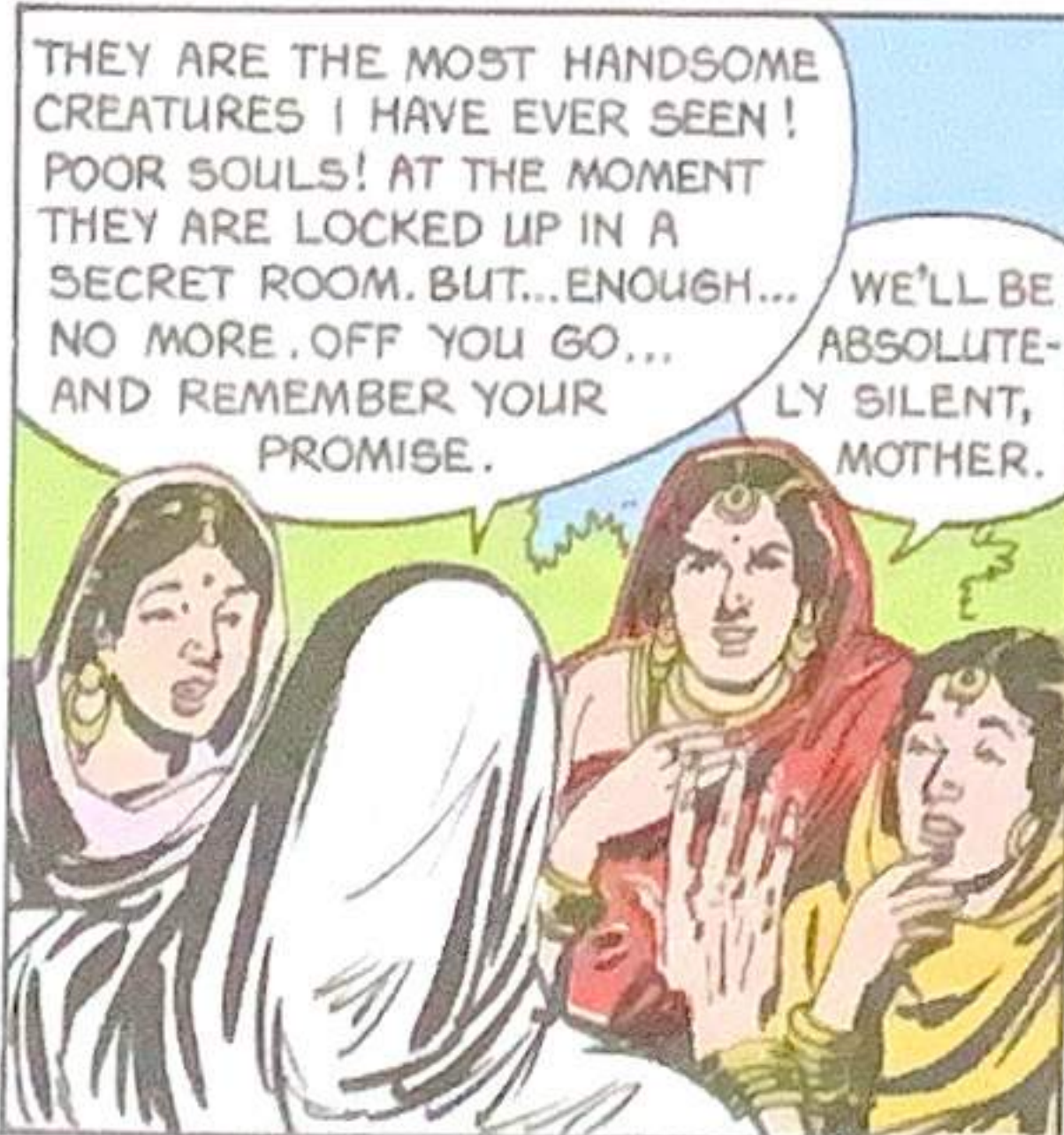
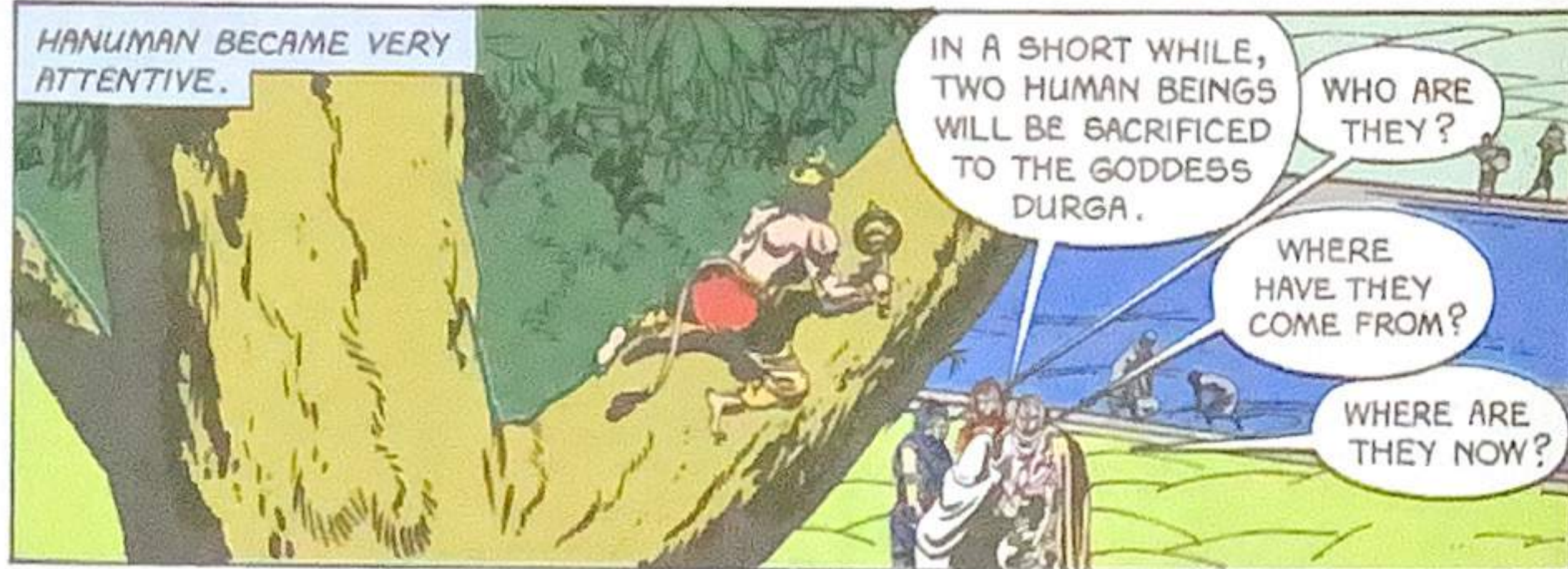


HOW SHALL  
I FIND THEM  
IN THIS VAST  
PLACE?











THEN HE REGAINED HIS NORMAL FORM.



WAKE UP, MY LORDS! I HAVE COME TO RESCUE YOU!

RAMA AND LAKSHMANA GOT UP WITH A START.

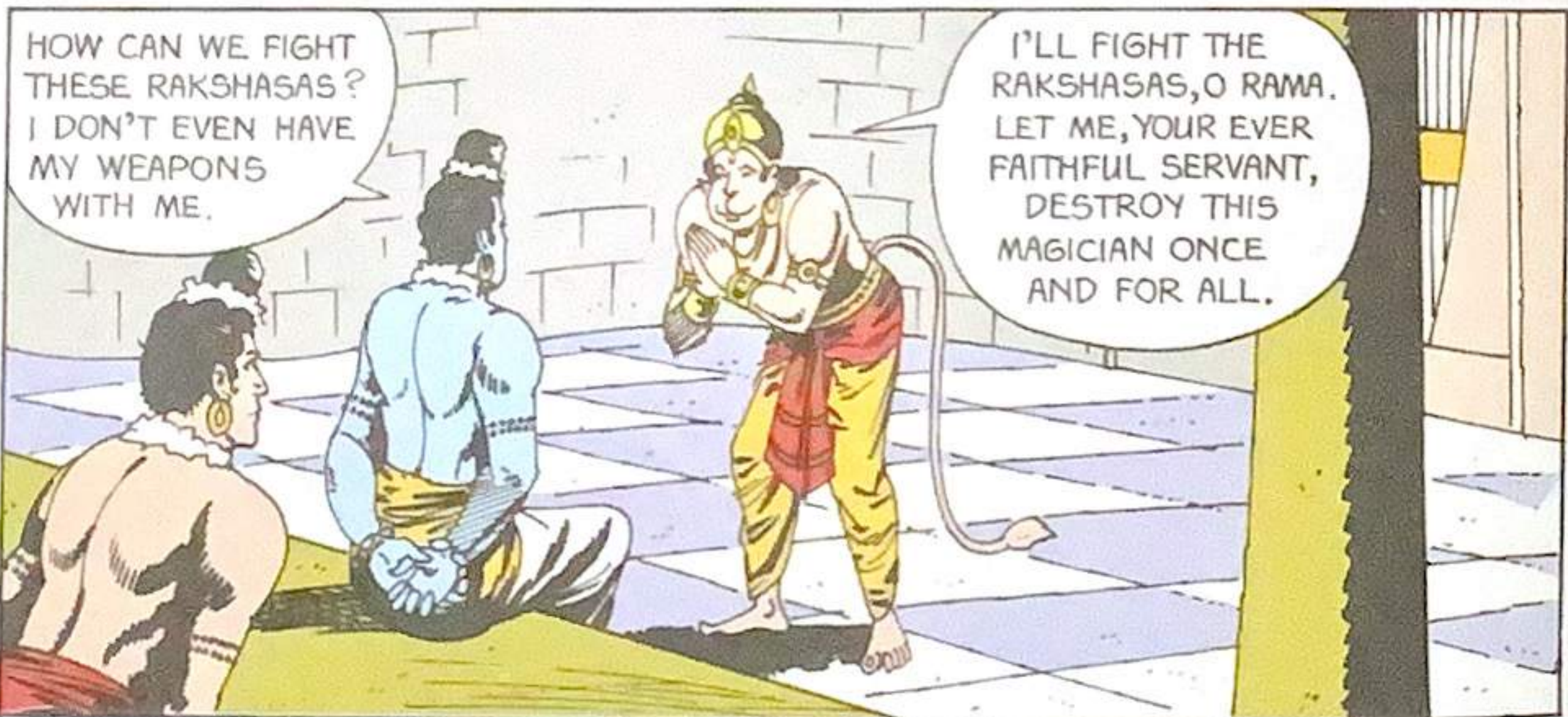


WHERE ARE WE?

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

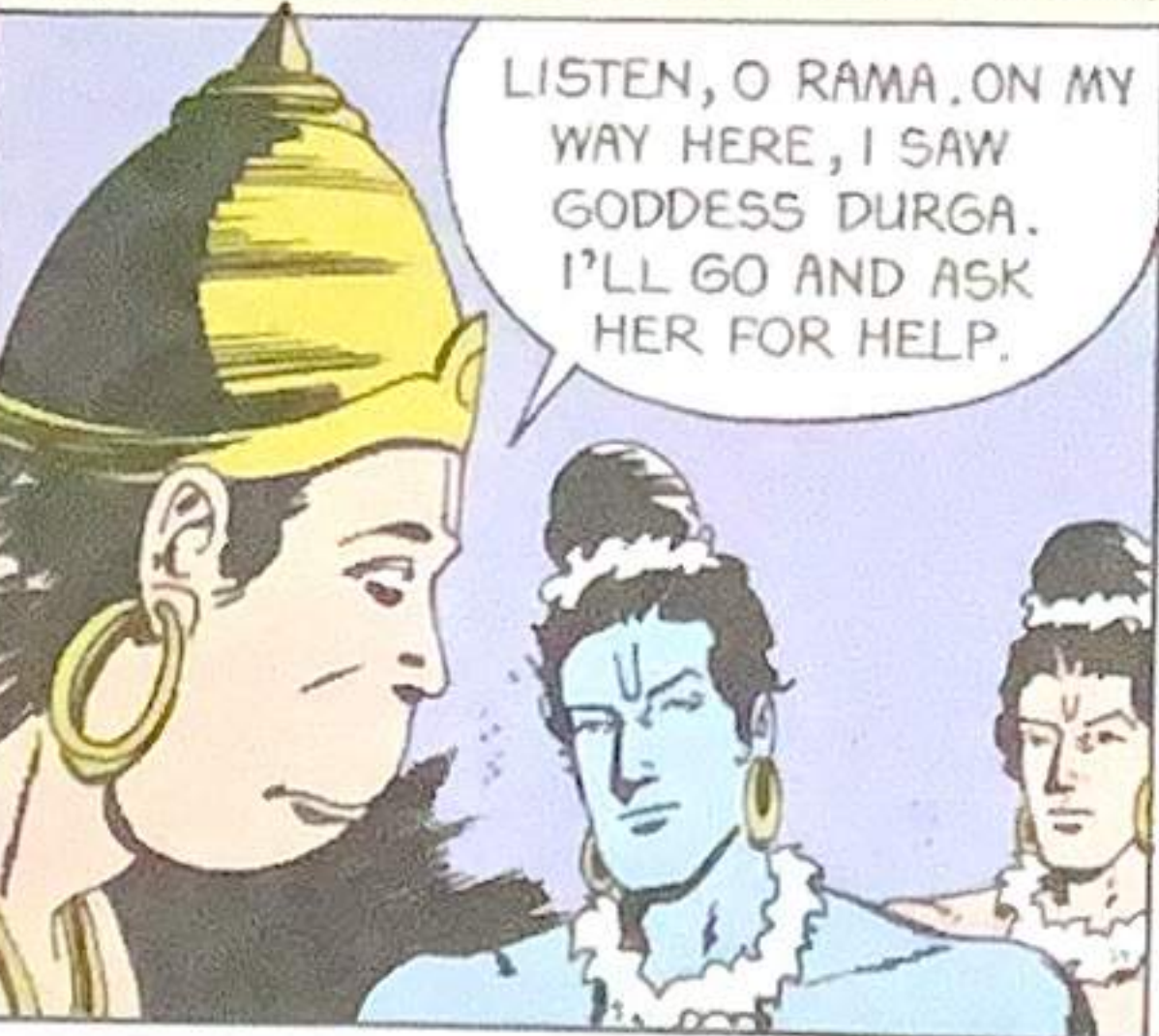
YOU ARE IN THE NETHER WORLD, THE PRISONERS OF MAHIRAVANA. HE BROUGHT YOU HERE USING HIS MAGICAL POWERS.

HOW CAN WE FIGHT THESE RAKSHASAS? I DON'T EVEN HAVE MY WEAPONS WITH ME.



I'LL FIGHT THE RAKSHASAS, O RAMA. LET ME, YOUR EVER FAITHFUL SERVANT, DESTROY THIS MAGICIAN ONCE AND FOR ALL.

HANUMAN THEN TOLD THEM OF MAHIRAVANA'S PLANS TO SACRIFICE THEM TO DURGA.



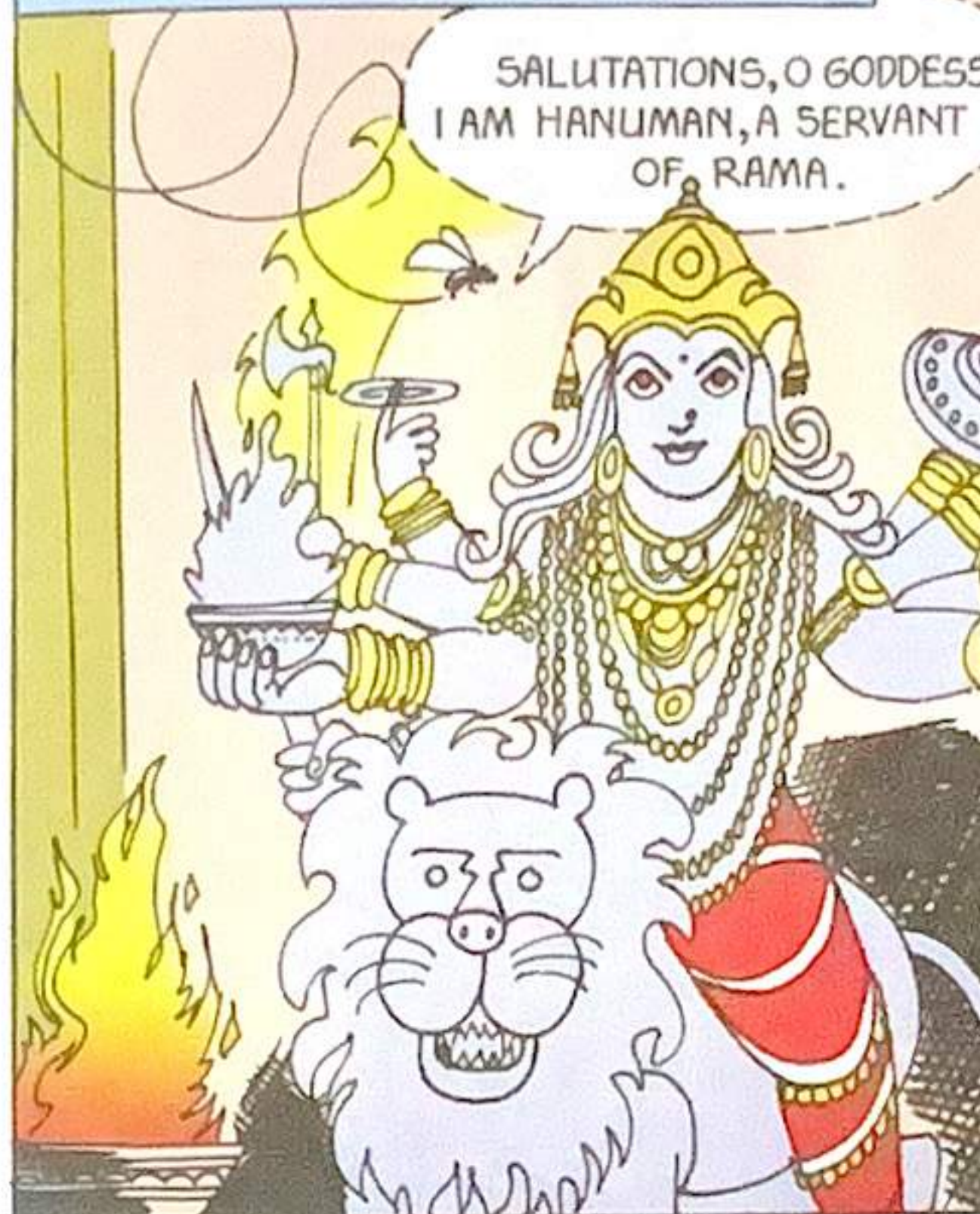
LISTEN, O RAMA. ON MY WAY HERE, I SAW GODDESS DURGA. I'LL GO AND ASK HER FOR HELP.

ALL I NEED NOW IS YOUR BLESSING, MY LORD!



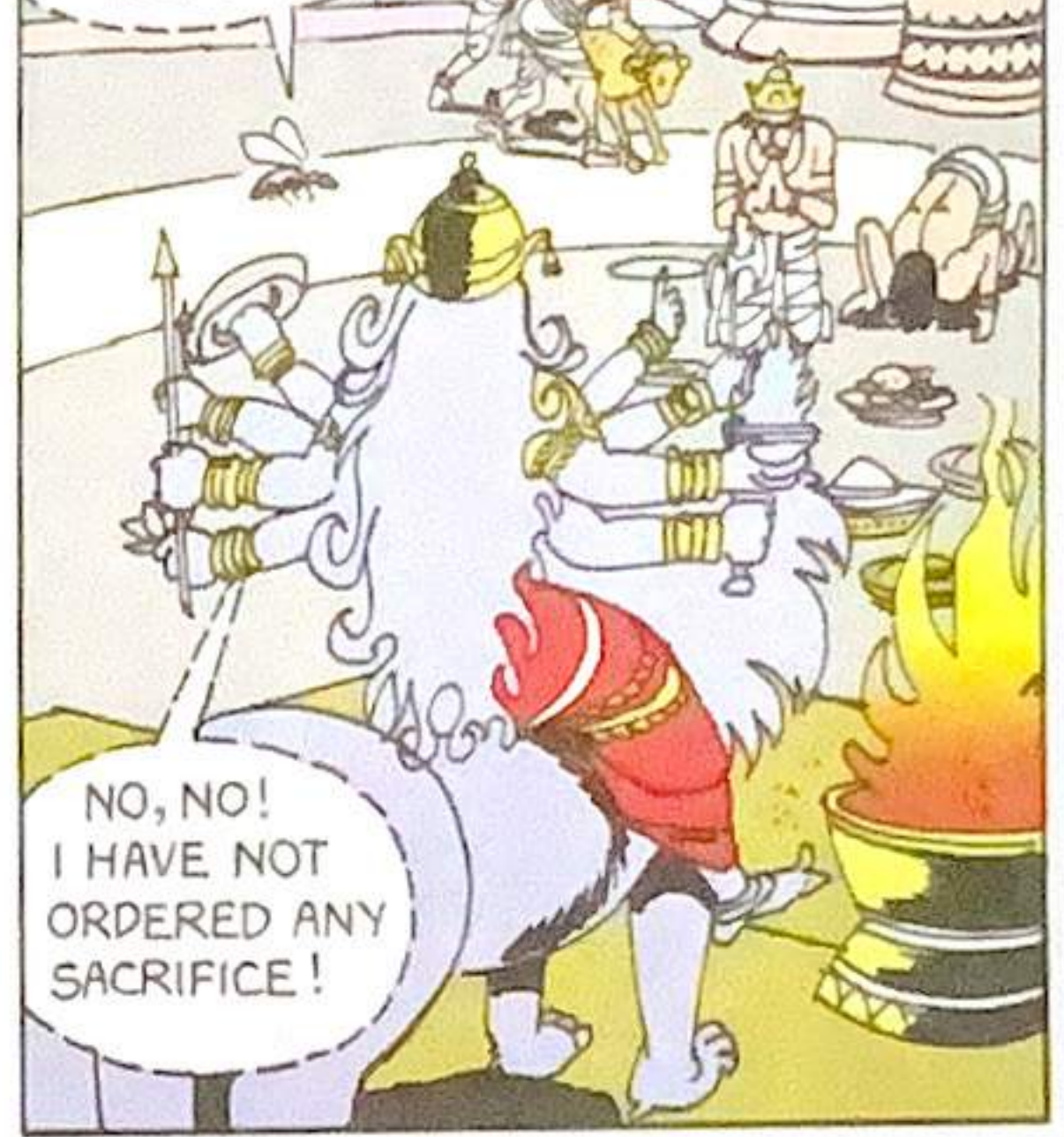
YOU ARE A TRUE FRIEND, HANUMAN. MAY YOU BE SUCCESSFUL.

ONCE AGAIN ASSUMING THE FORM OF A FLY, HANUMAN FLEW TO THE GODDESS.



SALUTATIONS, O GODDESS! I AM HANUMAN, A SERVANT OF RAMA.

THE EVIL MAHIRAVANA INTENDS TO SACRIFICE RAMA AND LAKSHMANA TO YOU. TELL ME, HAS THIS BEEN ORDERED BY YOU?



NO, NO! I HAVE NOT ORDERED ANY SACRIFICE!

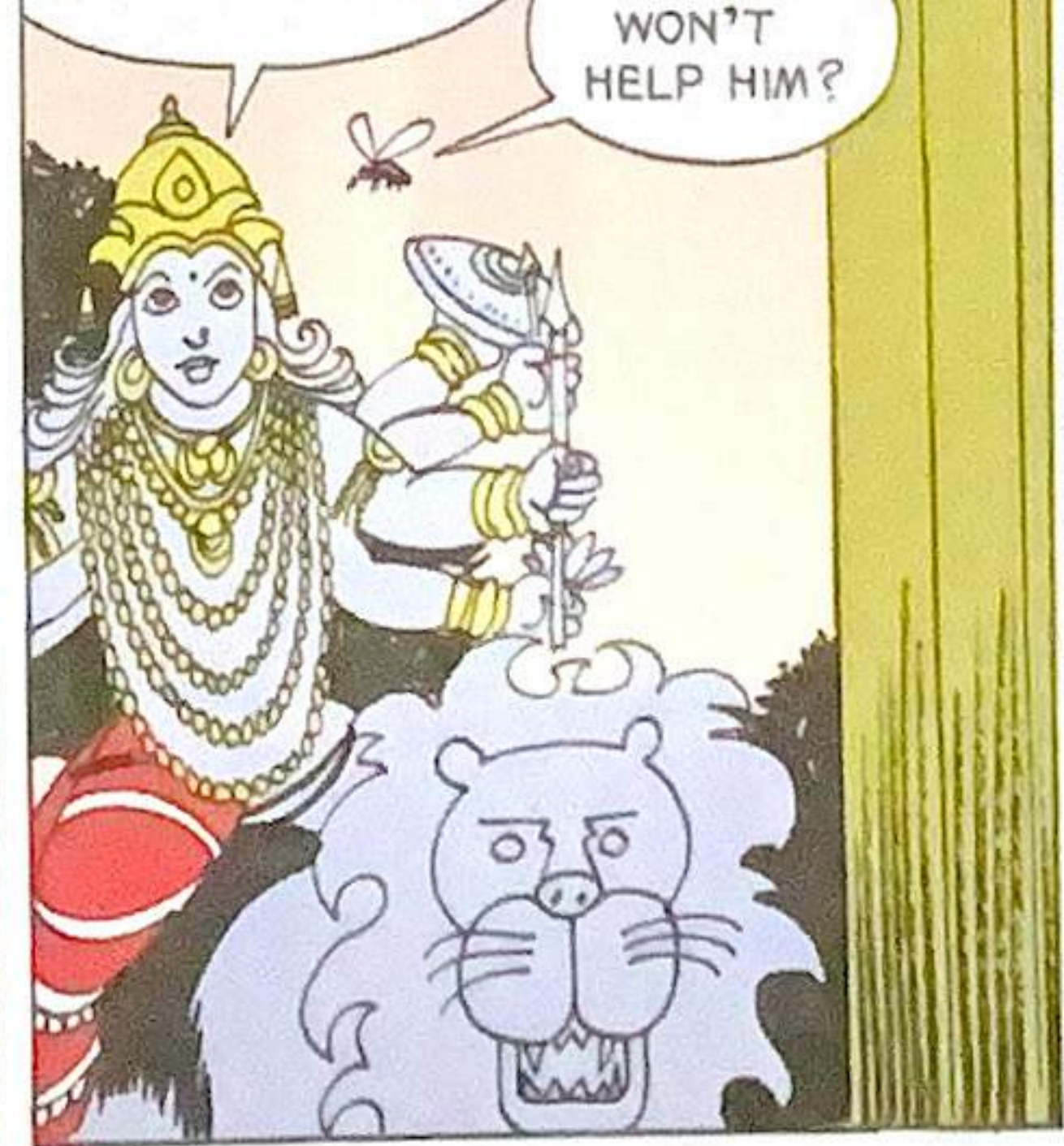
BUT MAHIRAVANA WORSHIPS YOU. WILL YOU HELP HIM? FOR IF YOU DO....

DON'T BE IMPATIENT, HANUMAN. LISTEN TO ME FIRST.

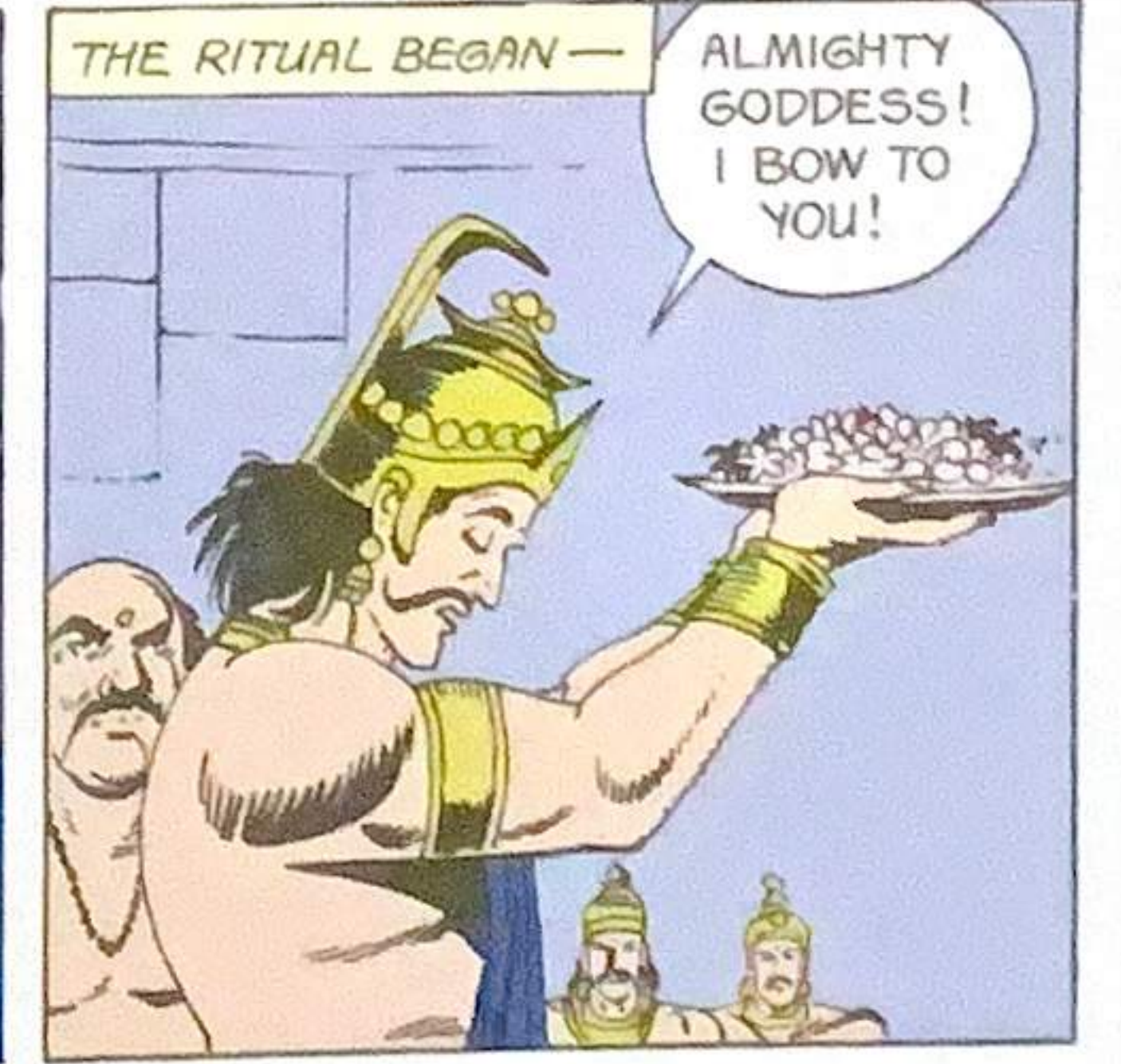
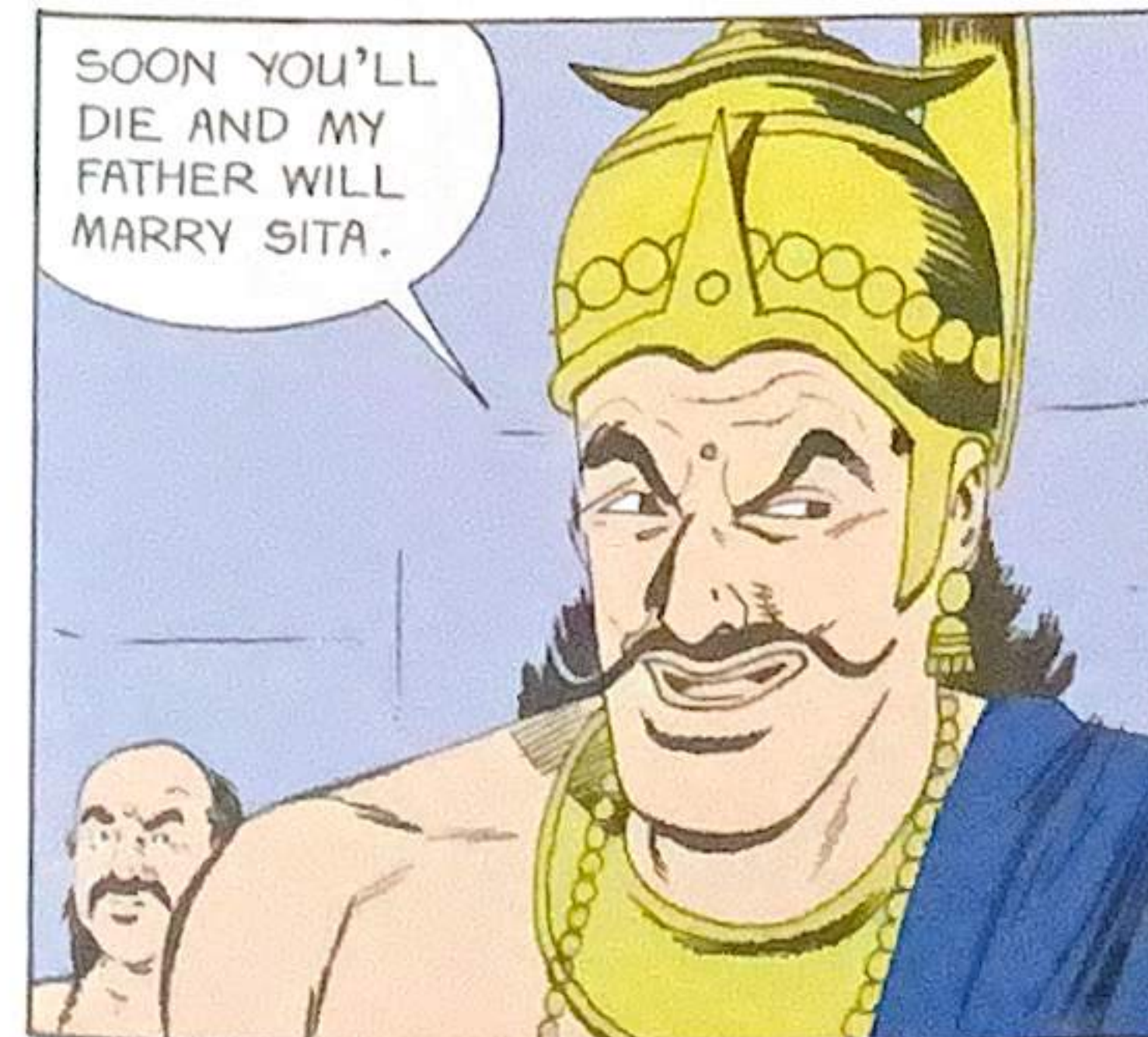
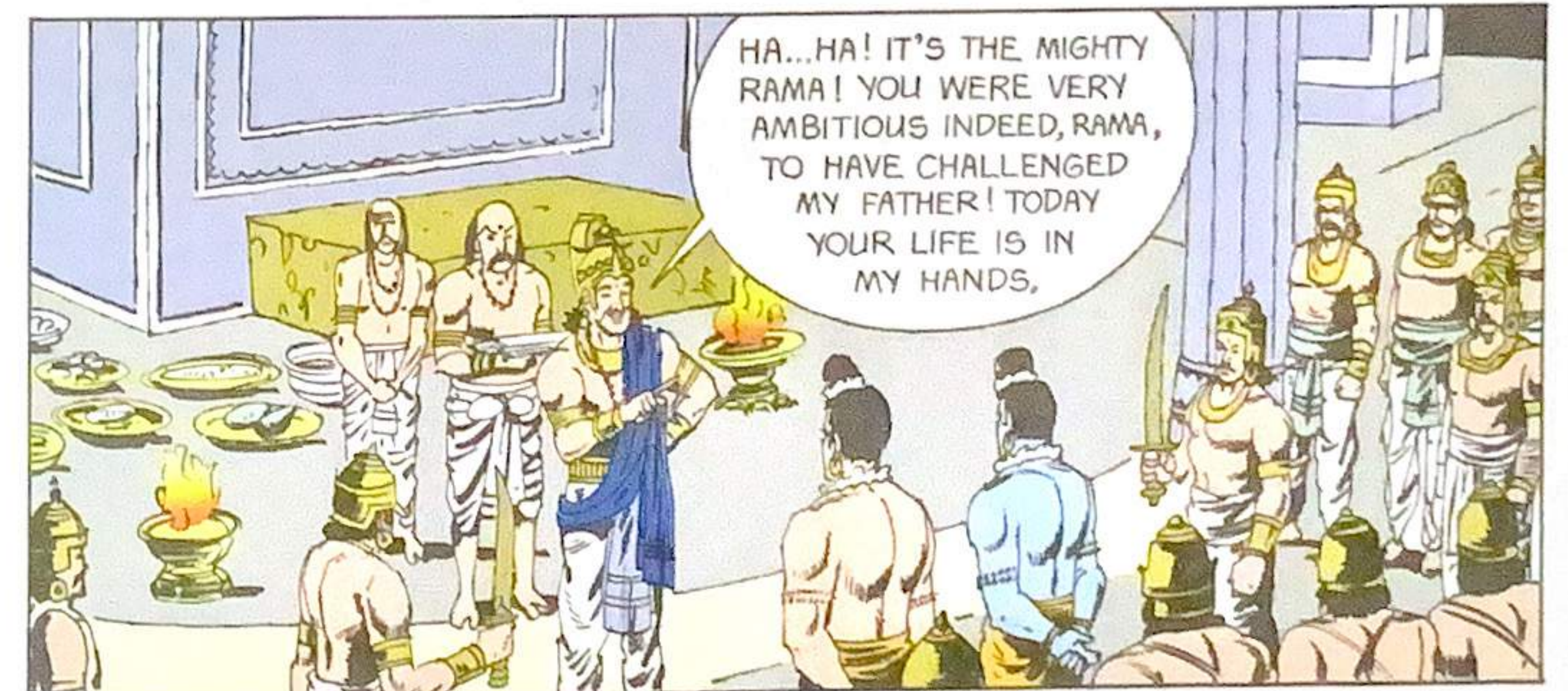
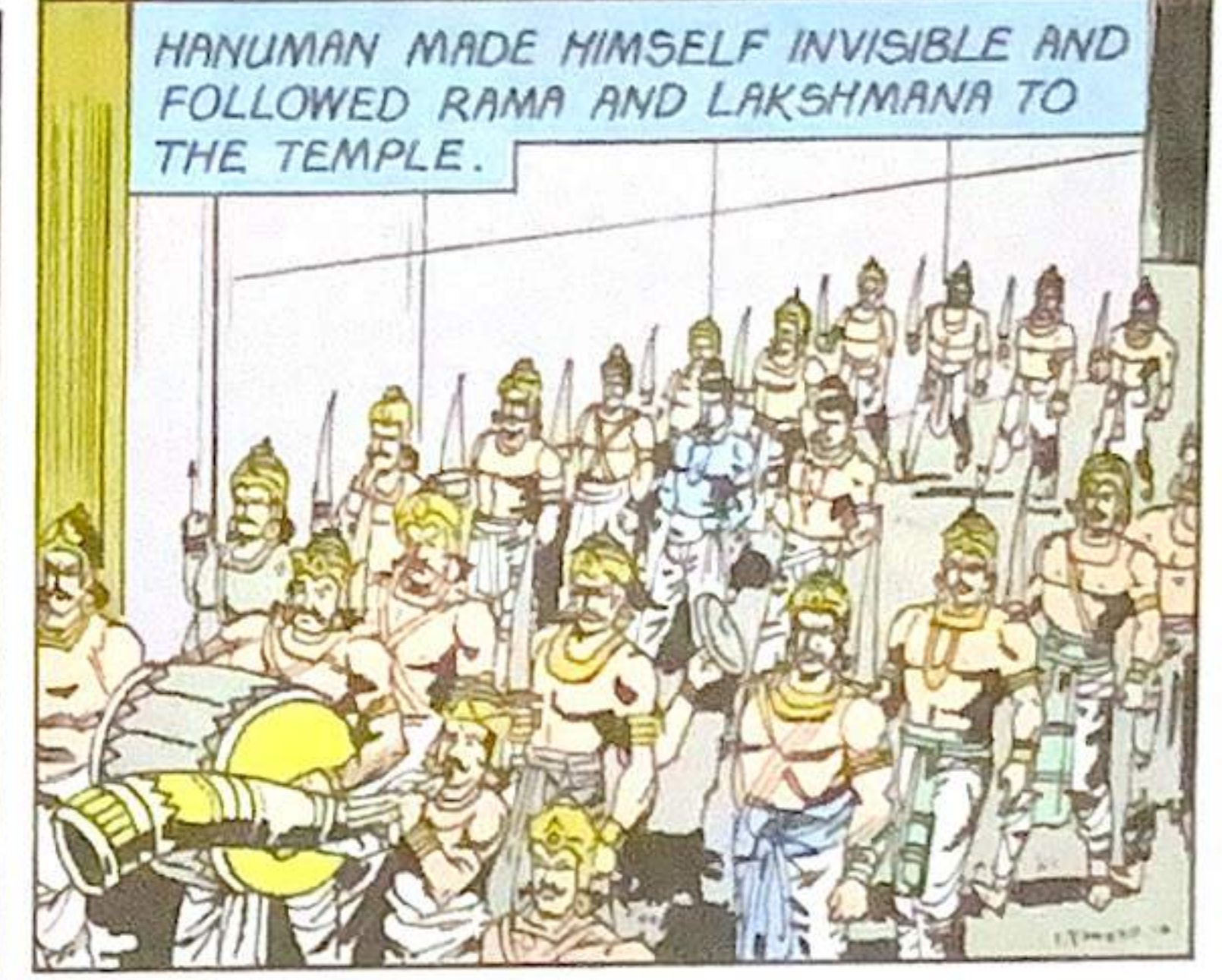
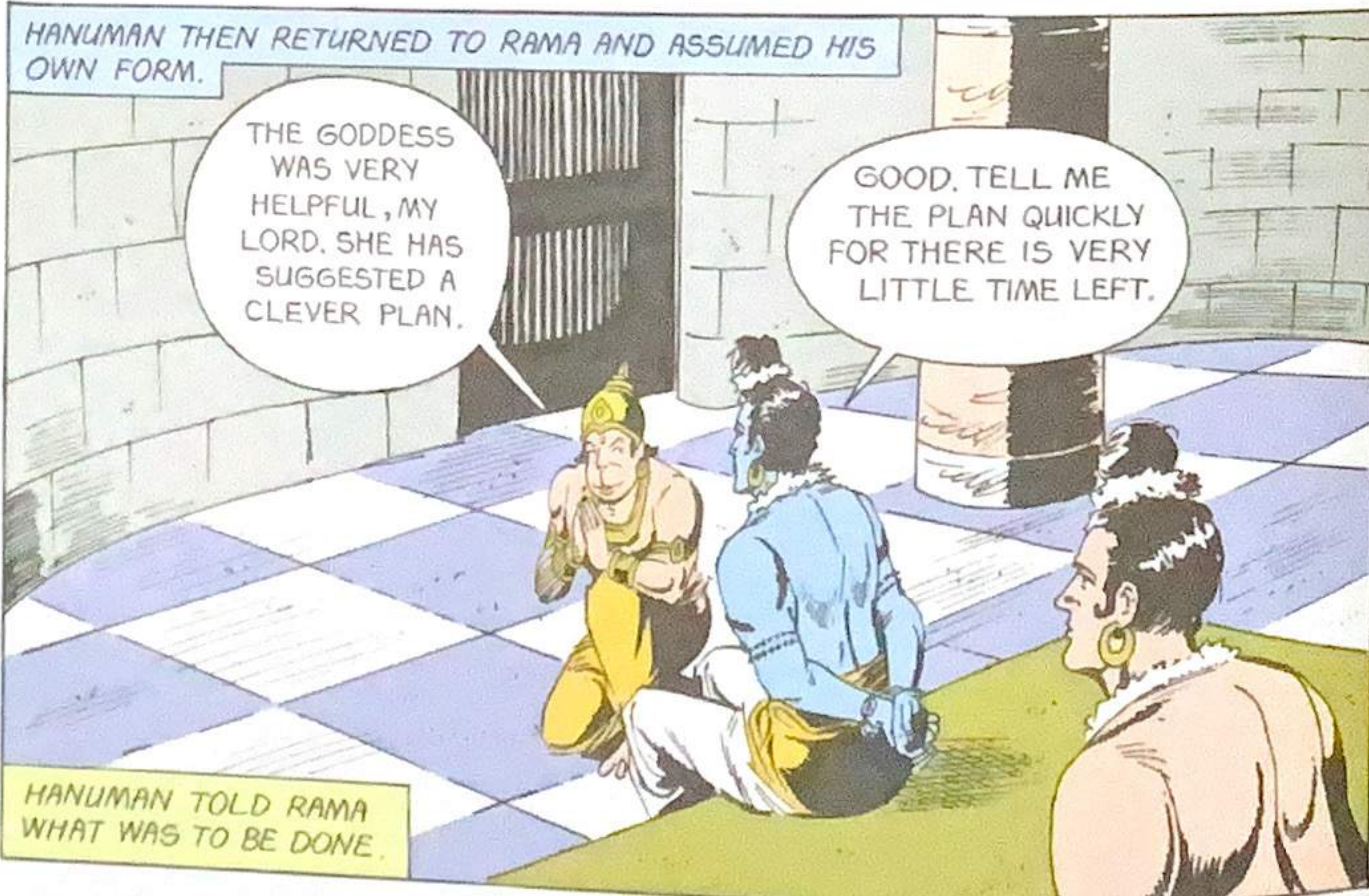


MAHIRAVANA WANTS TO GET RID OF HIS ENEMIES. THAT IS WHY HE IS SACRIFICING THEM. HE IS NOT DOING IT TO PLEASE ME.

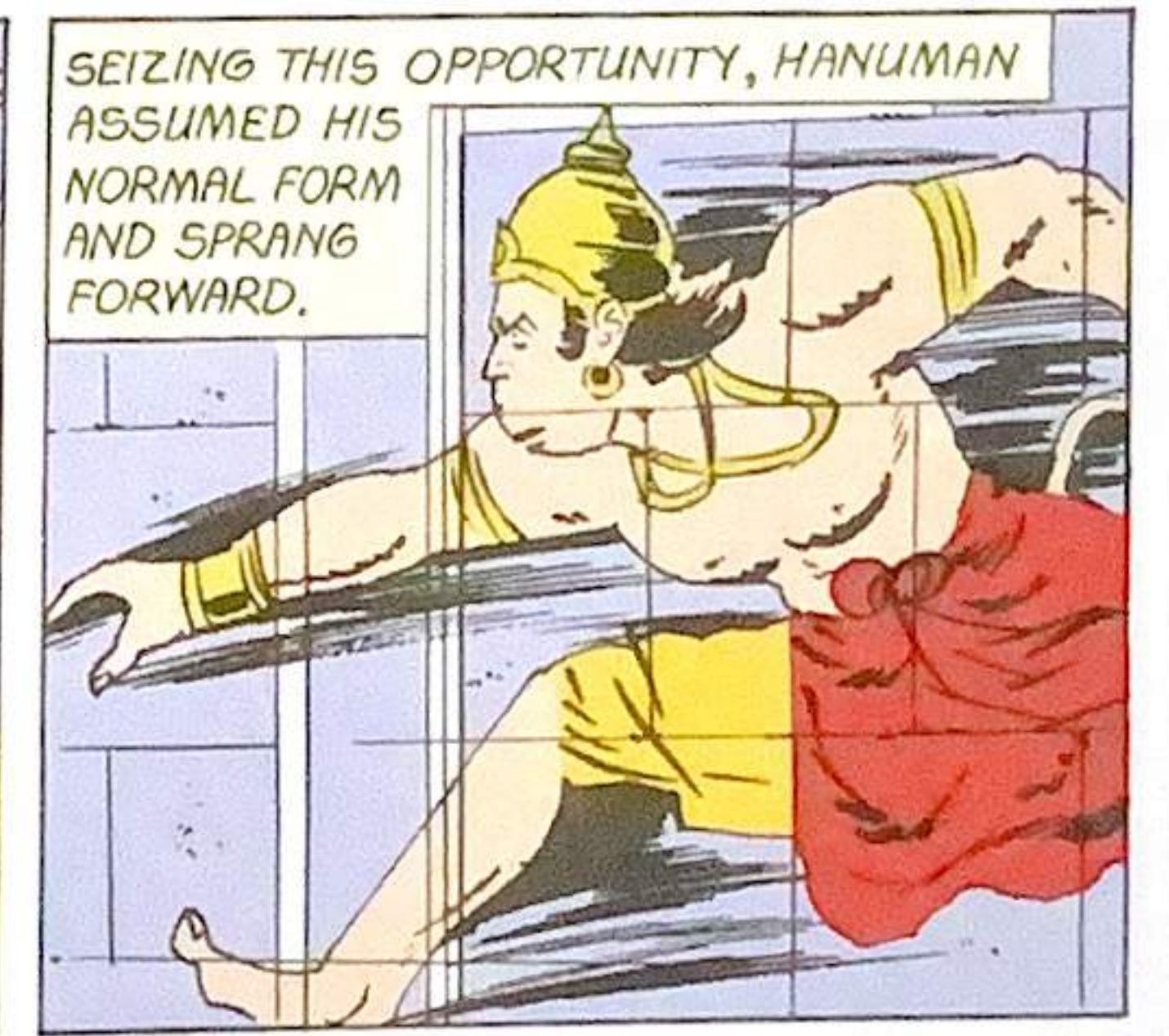
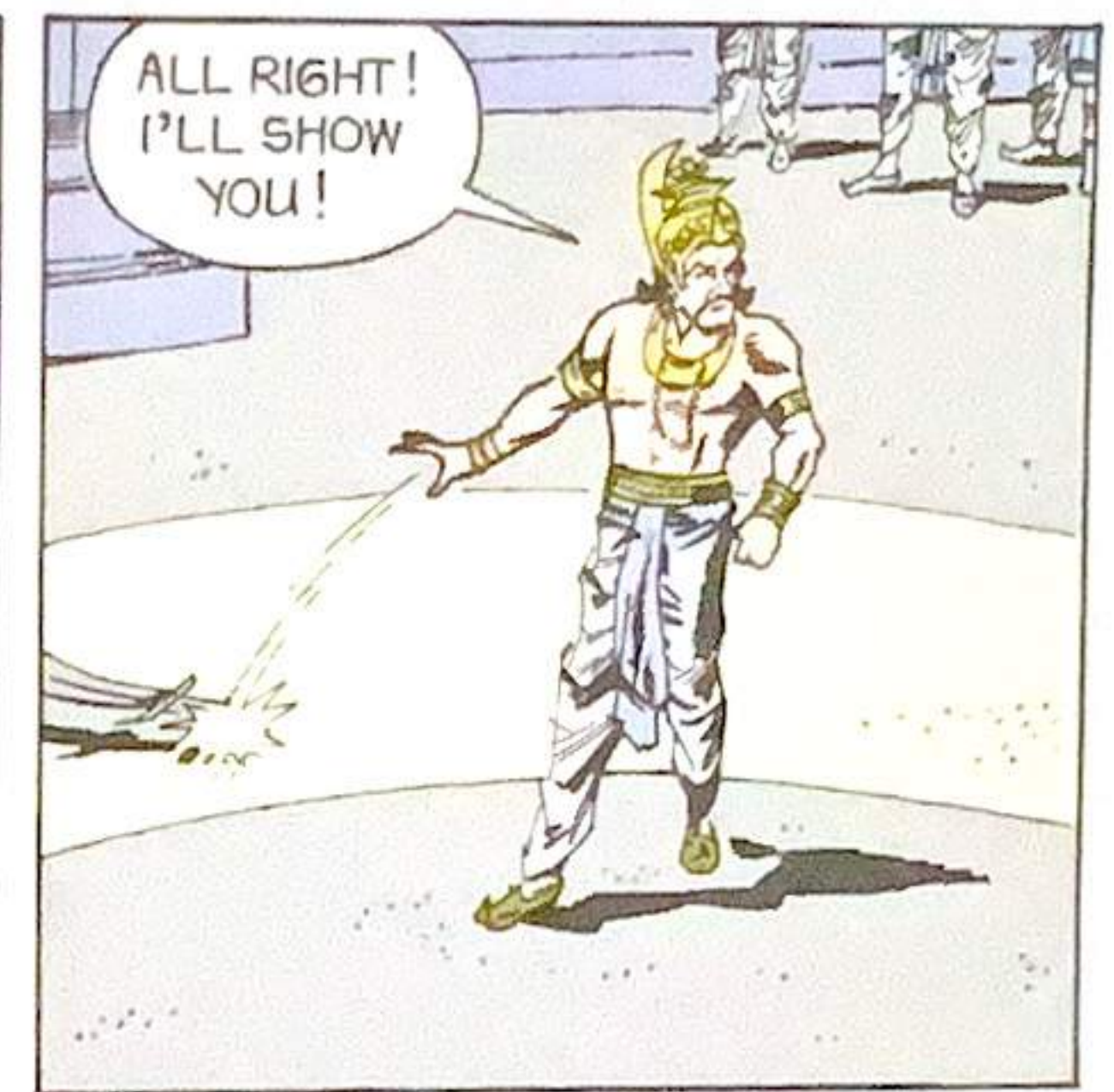
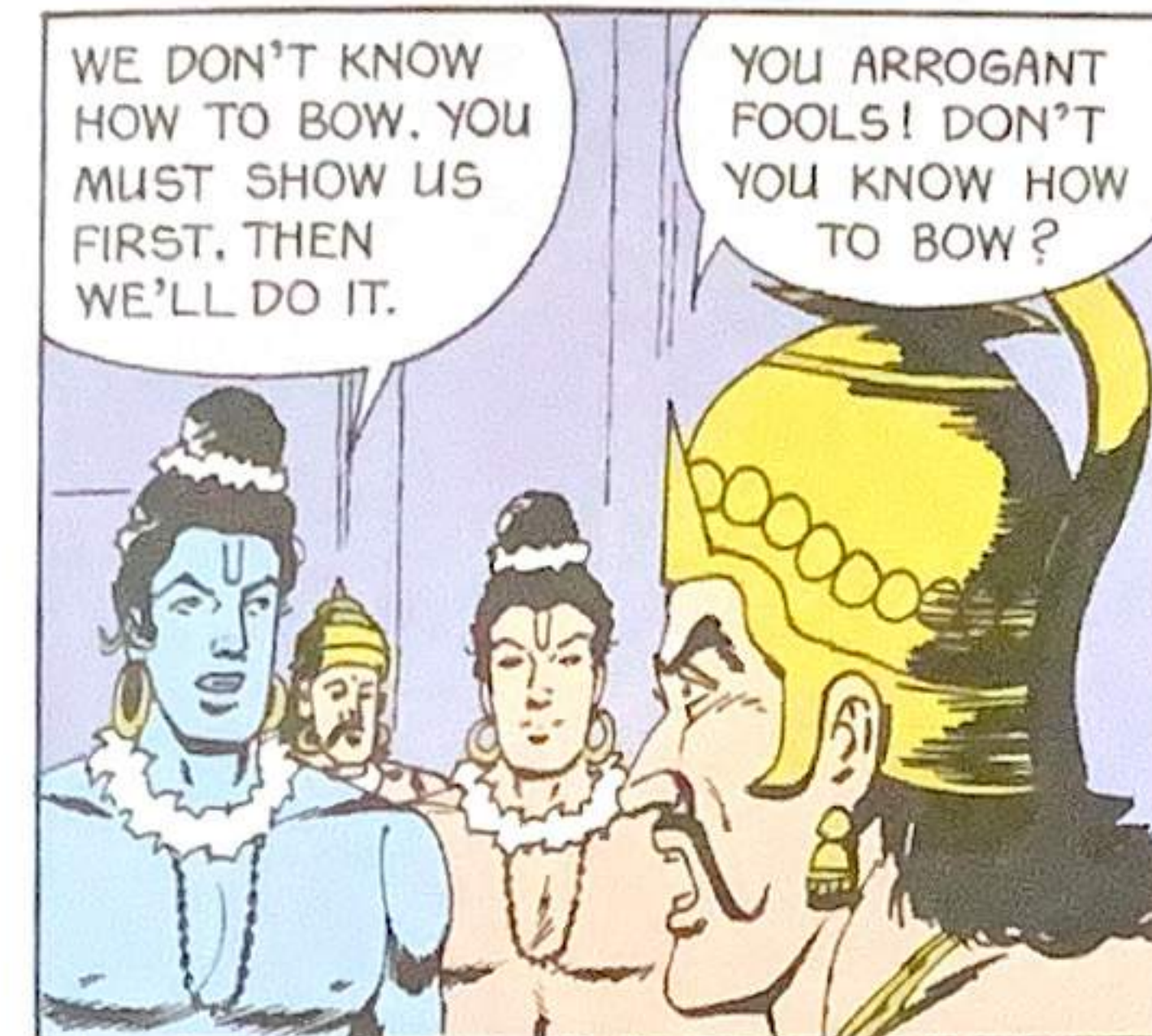
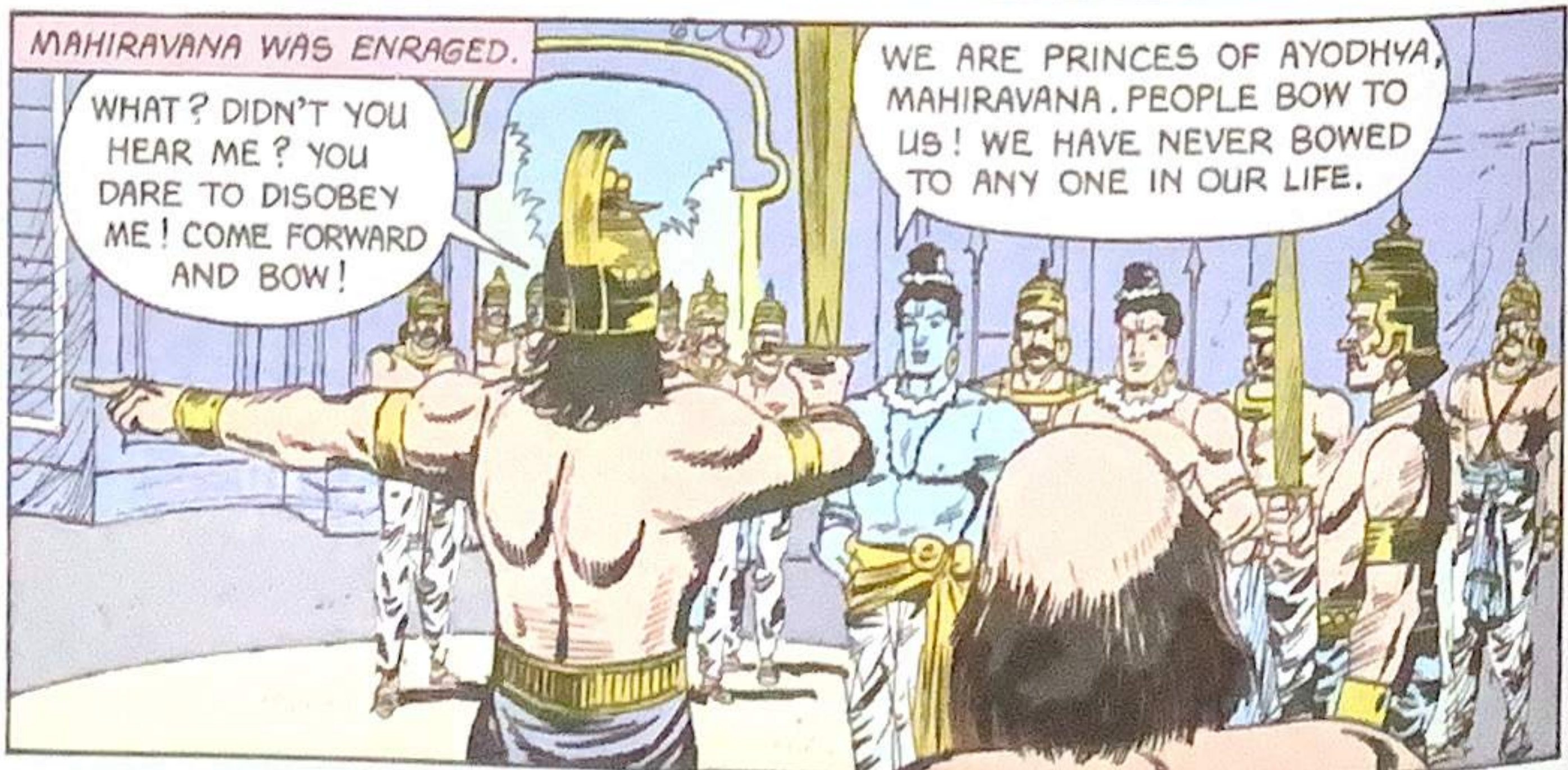
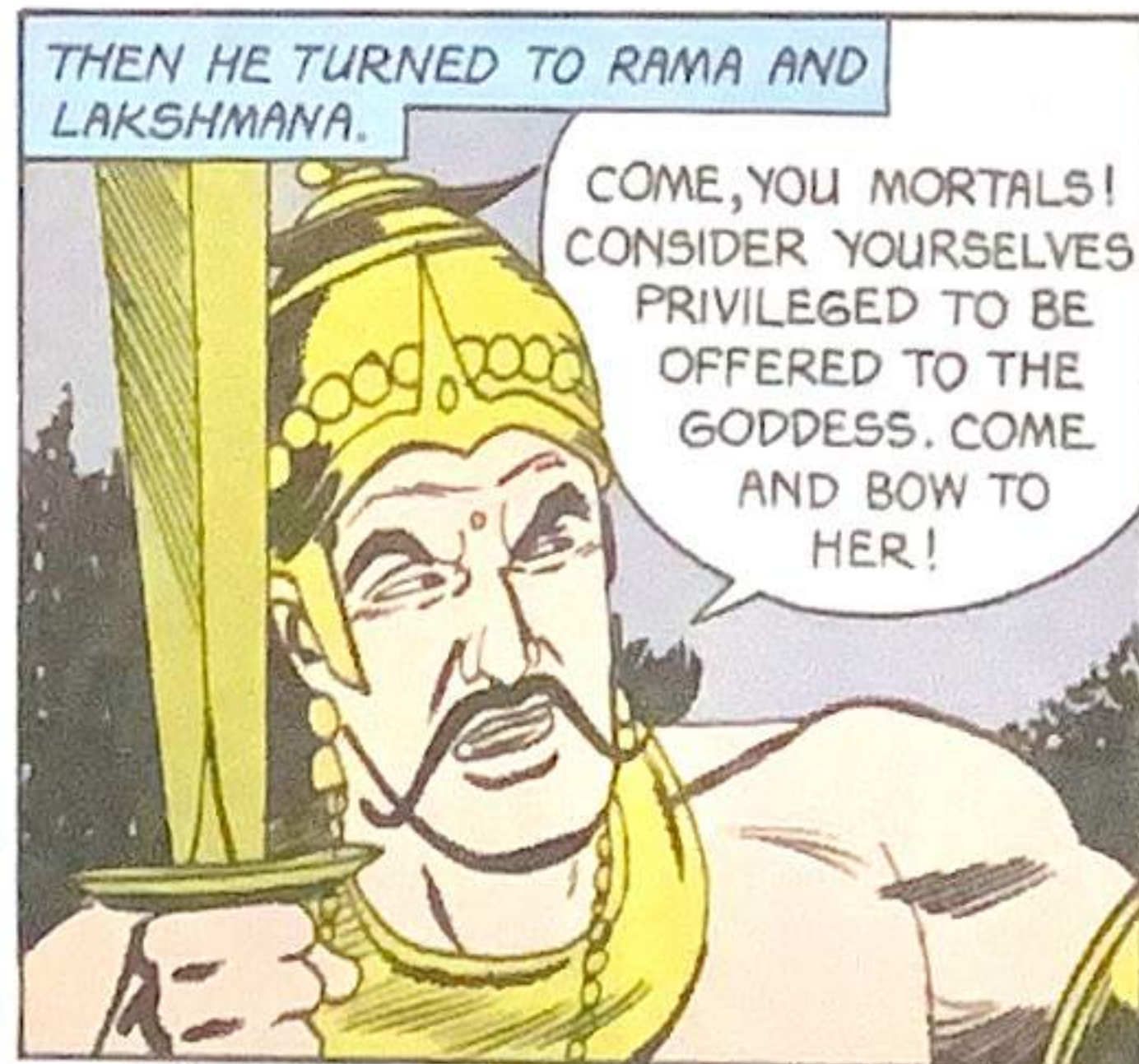
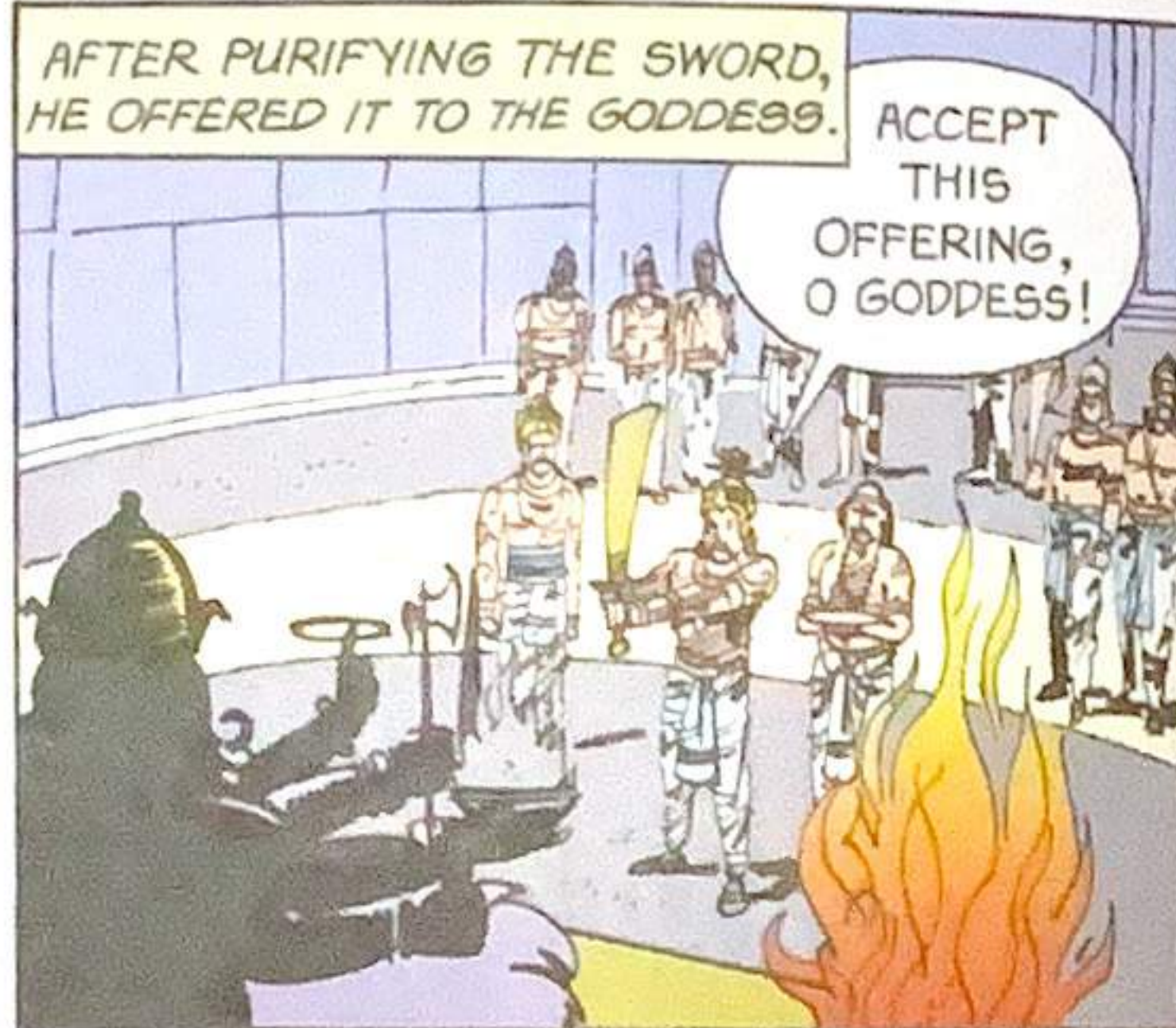
SO YOU WON'T HELP HIM?









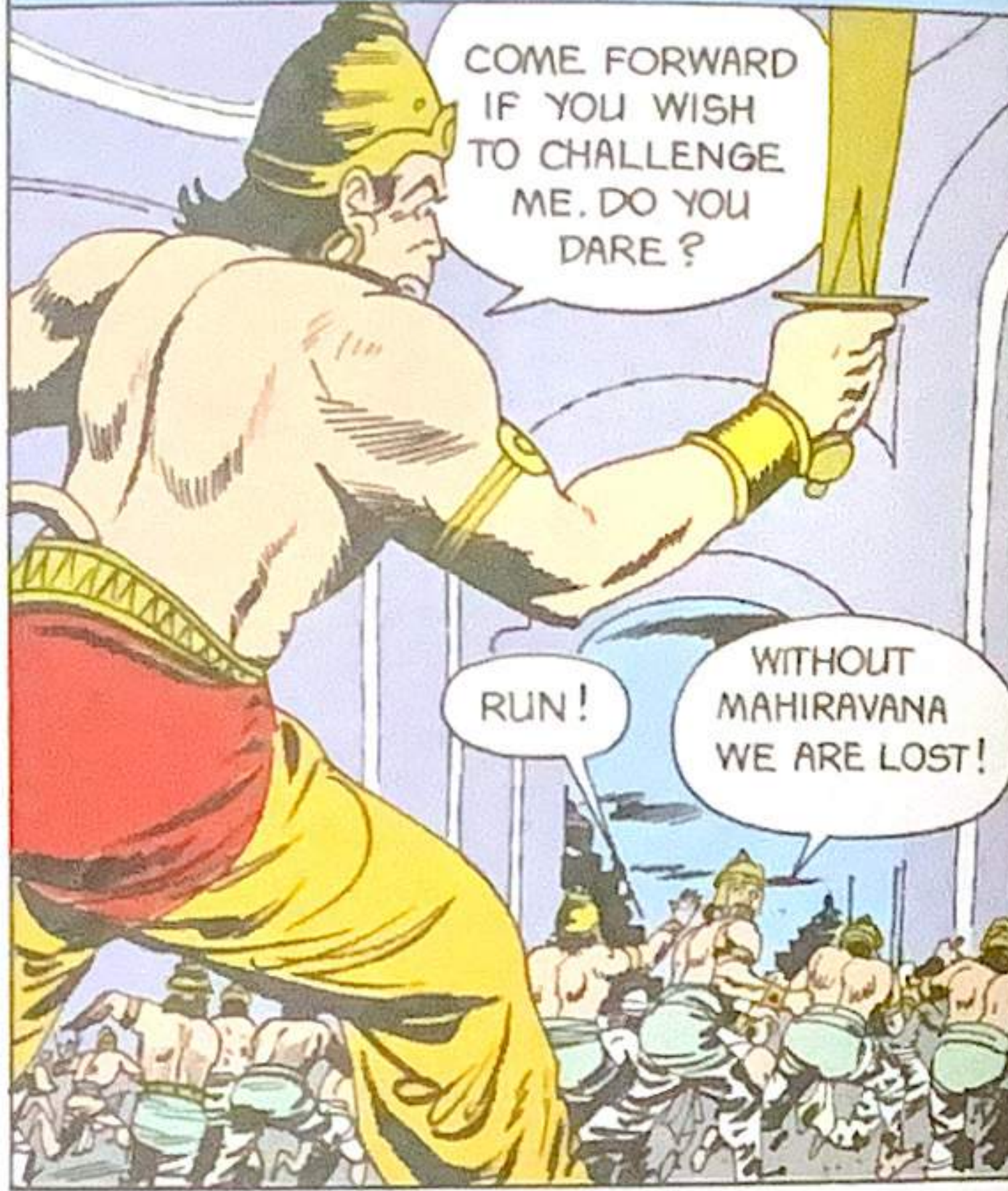




WITH TWO MORE BLOWS, HANUMAN SMASHED THE CHAINS THAT BOUND RAMA AND LAKSHMANA.



THEN HE TURNED TO DEAL WITH THE DEMONS.

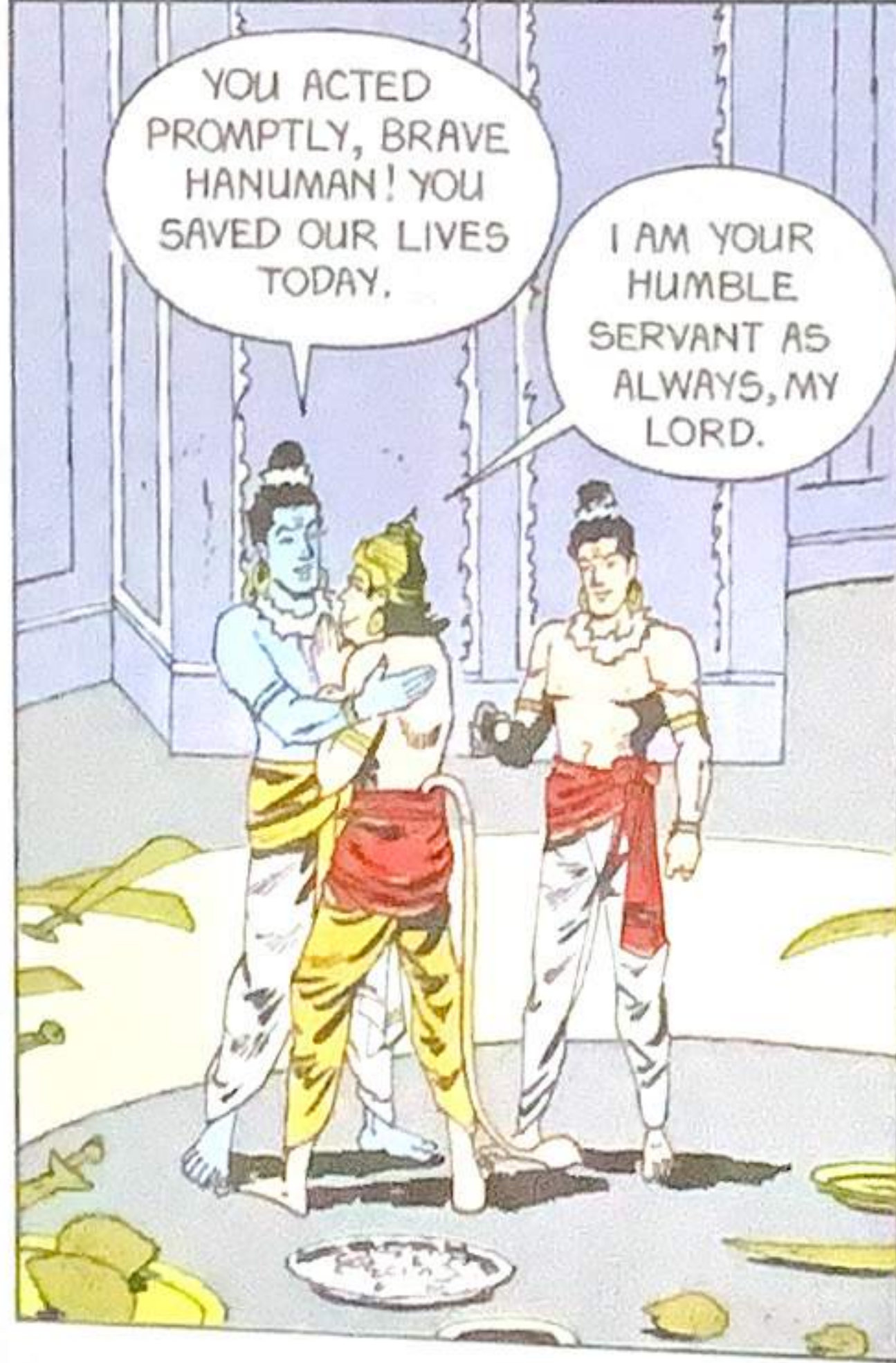
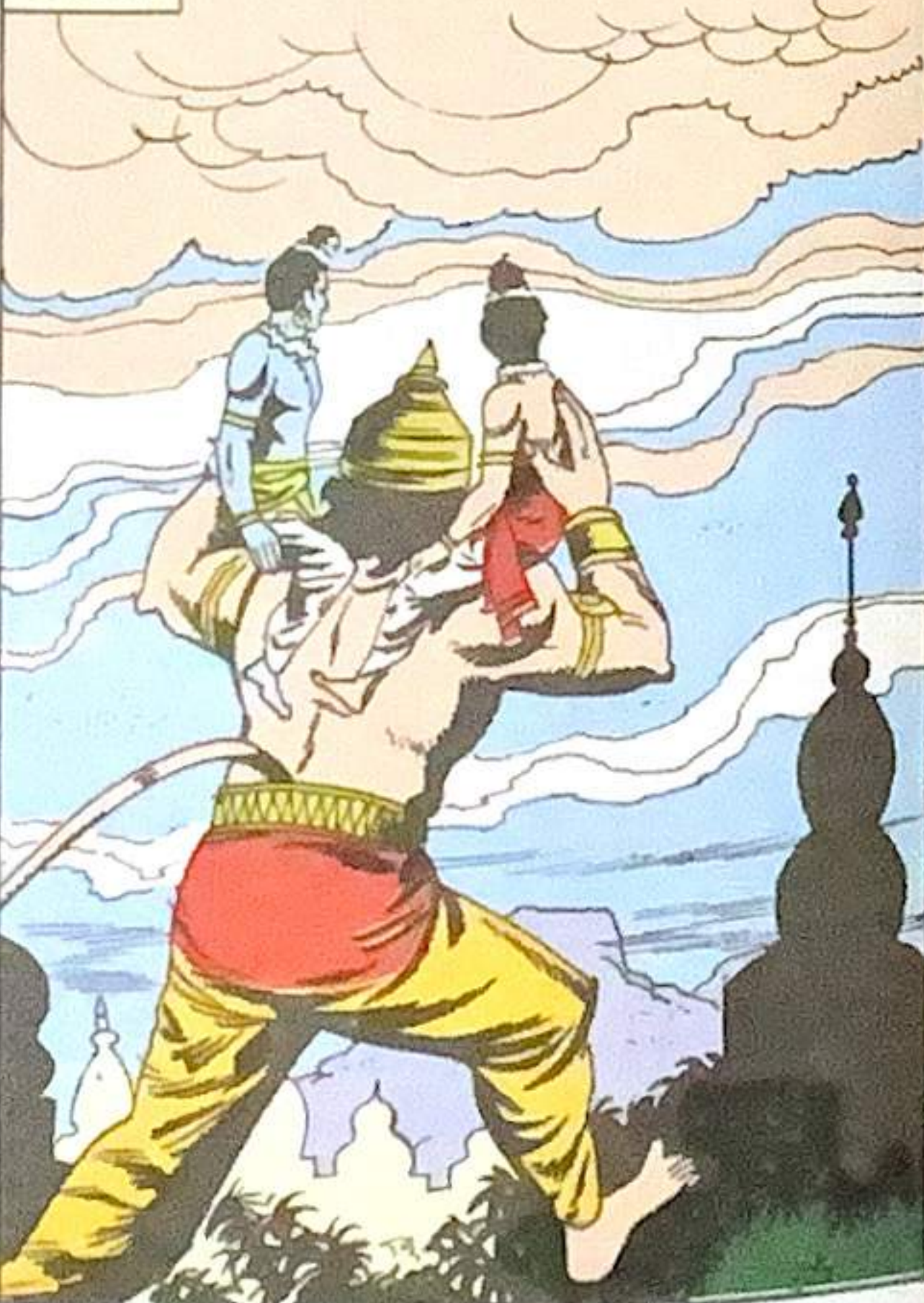


COME FORWARD IF YOU WISH TO CHALLENGE ME. DO YOU DARE?

WITHOUT MAHIRAVANA WE ARE LOST!

RUN!

SOON THEY STARTED ON THEIR JOURNEY BACK.



YOU ACTED PROMPTLY, BRAVE HANUMAN! YOU SAVED OUR LIVES TODAY.

I AM YOUR HUMBLE SERVANT AS ALWAYS, MY LORD.

MEANWHILE IN SUGREEVA'S CAMP—



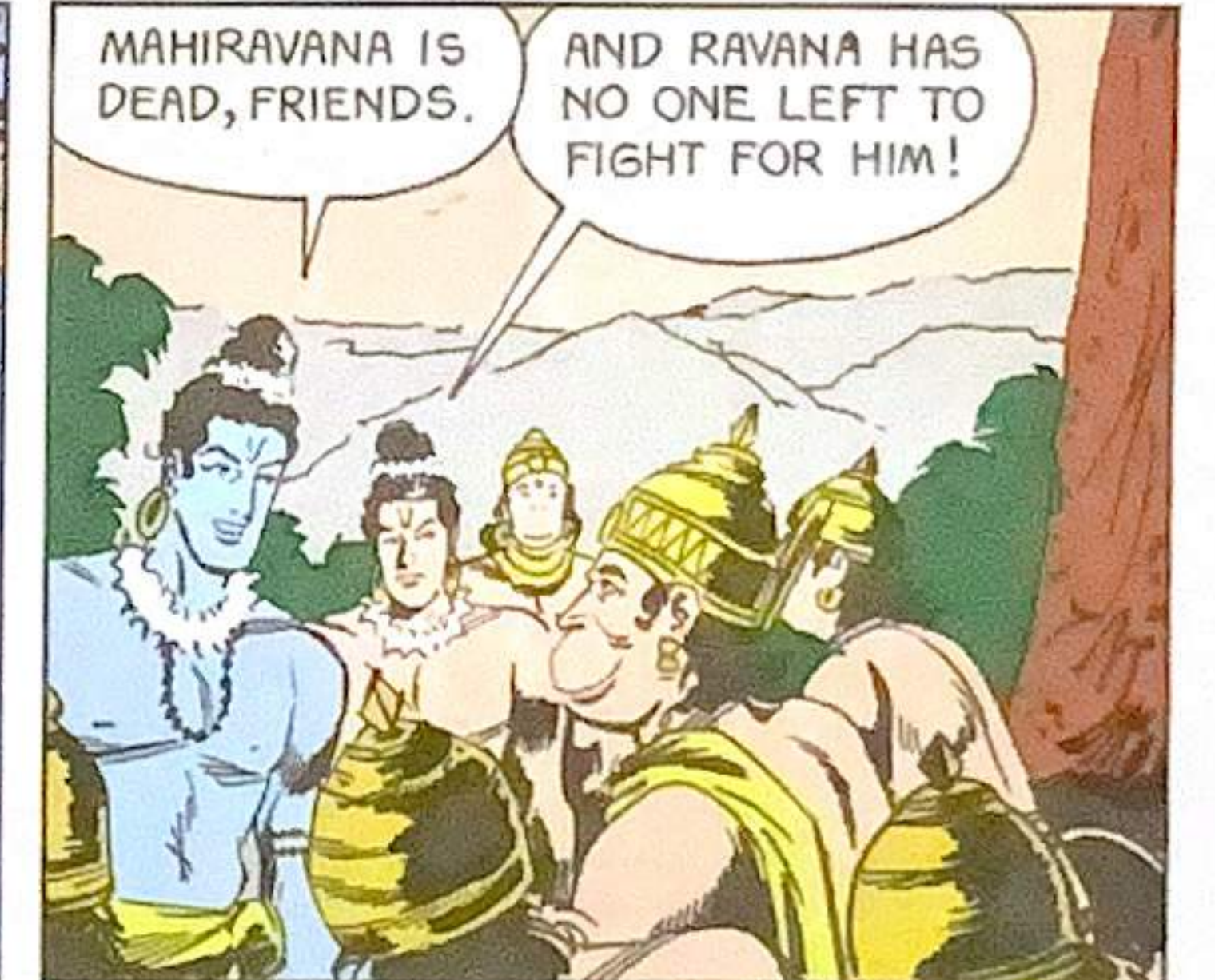
IT IS PAST NOON AND THEY HAVE NOT YET RETURNED. WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED TO THEM?

I'M SURE HANUMAN WILL NOT FAIL. LET'S TRY TO REMAIN CALM.



JUST THEN—

LOOK, KING SUGREEVA! THEY'VE COME!



MAHIRAVANA IS DEAD, FRIENDS.

AND RAVANA HAS NO ONE LEFT TO FIGHT FOR HIM!



HE'LL HAVE TO COME TO THE BATTLEFIELD HIMSELF TO FIGHT. AND THEN...

...VICTORY WILL BE OURS!

VICTORY TO RAMA!